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ON
THE INFLUENCE
ATTRIBUTED TO
PHILOSOPHERS, FREE-MASONS,
AND TO
THE ILLUMINATI,
ON THE
REVOLUTION OF FRANCE.

BY
J. J. MOUNIER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE MANUSCRIPT, AND CORRECTED
UNDER THE INSPECTION OF THE AUTHOR,

BY
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1801.

PREFACE,

BY THE TRANSLATOR,

ONE of the chief sources of misfortune, inseparably attached to times of revolution and of civil discord, is the want of moderation in men of all parties. In such eventful periods as that in which we live, men choose their party often they know not why, and pursue with heat all the measures of those with whom they associate themselves, without reflecting whether they are called for by necessity, whether they are consistent with prudence, or warranted by justice. Two men equally able and equally honest, placed within the revolutionary vortex, may be determined by the slightest circumstance, operating on their vanity, their pride, or their envy, and

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without their being conscious of the cause, to choose opposite courses, and to pursue them with equal zeal and obstinacy; the one as a violent unbending aristocrat, and the other as an insolent unfeeling republican. But such extremes, on either side, are not consistent with unsullied virtue, or with pure notions of political and moral duty. Such however is the fact, that in times of commotion and of civil discord, the bulk of men are generally thus arranged into opposite and hostile parties, and often become guilty of crimes, in maintaining the exaggeration of their respective opinions, at the bare aspect of which they would have shuddered in times of tranquillity.

In judging of the state of parties, in inquiring into the causes, the progress, and consequences of revolutions, impartial men must ever have this general fact in view. But it is difficult even for the spectators of such scenes as we have witnessed during the last ten years, to be impartial; and if they are even disposed to be so, it is still more difficult for them to meet with impartial information respecting the real causes, and

and ultimate consequences of those transactions, the existence and immediate effects of which they have witnessed.

The Revolution of France has been viewed through the mist of prejudice by men of all parties and of all nations; by those who have favoured, by those who have dreaded, and by those who have thoroughly detested it; and causes are assigned for its rise, its spirit, effects, progress, and tendency, numerous as the persons who have presumed to assign them, and various as their principles and means of information.

Some men, from the very beginning, have eagerly wedded themselves to this mighty ruin, and have continued its faithful partizans in every stage of its progress, and the avowed and resolute enemies of all attempts, however legitimate, to arrest its desolating progress, and to confine it at least within the limits of the unhappy country which gave it birth. I would not commit a single village—I would not com-

mit the honour, the life and property of the meanest citizen in Europe, to the care of such men : for, if they be not incorrigibly wicked, they are unquestionably incorrigibly weak ; and weakness is often as ruinous in its consequences as positive vice.

There are others, whose opposition to the Revolution, in all its stages, has been equally uniform, and who, by their ill-judged opposition, have done much harm : but they are by no means liable to the same degree of blame, in supporting a system sanctioned by long experience, and in opposing it to principles which had only produced anarchy and ruin. Their views have often been false, and perhaps their views interested ; but whilst they counselled and took part in no crime, their conscience might be clear. Some men of this class, however, have had their minds so deeply impressed with the horrors and the inexplicable extent of the revolutionary furor, that they have become at length frightened almost

almost at their own shadow, and they have endeavoured to communicate their prejudices and their fears to the public.

The Revolution of France, perhaps in every stage of its progress, and certainly in more than one, has been in a real state of conspiracy against all the established governments in the world, as well as against the happiness and tranquillity of France itself. Numerous discontented persons in every country have doubtless associated themselves to the views of the French Republicans, and were ready to assist them in desolating other countries, as they had desolated their own. This indeed is the grand cause of the rapid progress they have made in those countries which their armies have over-run. Their first entry was facilitated by discontented men, and aided by domestic treason. The dashing principles and rapid progress of the French Revolutionists gave a new stimulus to bad passions, wherever they existed, by placing an example of successful rebellion within their view. A certain order of men, therefore,

fore, in every country, became naturally the allies of the demagogues of Paris, and these latter demanded nothing better than to have such partizans in every quarter, to which their rage, their ambition, or their thirst for plunder, might lead them to direct their arms : and in order to elude the vigilance of the magistrate, and avoid the premature suppression of their conspiracies, it was natural for them to make use of such private societies as already existed, or to institute new ones.

The Revolution of France, arising in that country from various local causes, which exist not, at least not in the same proportion, elsewhere, was yet of such a nature as to have a mighty influence on other countries, and was naturally enough calculated to excite all those revolutionary assemblies, parties, societies, and conspiracies, of the existence of which, in several parts of Europe, we have the most certain proof.

Such seems to be the natural mode of explaining some of the results of the Revolution.

volution. It is easy to conceive a mighty and extensive ruin, once begun to totter, involving extraneous objects in its destructive fall. But some men have taken the effect for the cause, and have considered the French Revolution, which imparted new vigour to such traitorous societies as already existed, and gave birth to many more, to be the effect of a secret conspiracy of Philosophers, of Free-Masons, and of the Illuminati—and in no circumstance of the history of the Revolution, has the violence of party-spirit been more evidently exhibited, on both sides, than in this.

Whilst some men have believed all the assertions, however improbable, and all the deductions, however strained, which have been brought forward on this subject, with implicit confidence, others have, with equal confidence, treated the whole as a vile fabrication, and have treated with the most unwarrantable contempt even the most respectable persons, who have thought proper on this subject to be of a different opinion.

opinion. Both these exaggerations have had the worst effects—on both sides it is possible to prove error or bad faith; and this being proved, confirms and aggravates the prejudices of each. Barruel's *Memoirs* is evidently a party production, and may be justly treated as such by men of all parties: but it does not tend to advance the cause of truth and impartiality, to treat even Barruel with contempt, without shewing at the same time wherein he has erred, and wherein he has misled his readers by the violence of his zeal, and without granting that his information is sometimes accurate and important. Barruel's work, partial and violent as it obviously is, was calculated to make a considerable impression in England, situated as that nation is with respect to France and the rest of Europe, and considering the nature and importance of the facts stated as therein proved. Yet the impression it has made, is far from being so great or so extensive as is generally imagined, and as is daily repeated with

with the absurdest inferences here in Germany. Had any able and respectable man among the literati of this country, who are so strongly and directly accused in the work in question, taken up the pen and proved to the English nation, how much Barruel had abused their confidence—had he written with impartiality and moderation, and produced the necessary proofs and references—I am fully persuaded that the dispute would have been quickly ended. But when, instead of this, the English people found nothing but injurious reflexions, not only against Barruel, &c. but against their nation; when they found a large party among the German literati abusing the British empire, its constitution, its government, and its conduct in the war, and defending the French in almost all their operations, however absurd and unjust, it was the natural, and perhaps the just effect of party-spirit to lead them to suppose these men the wicked or interested partizans of the Revolution. Among the literati of Germany, there are not
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many who seem to have any just notions of true liberty; or if there are, they seem extremely ignorant of the nature and spirit of the British Constitution. On the contrary, instead of attempting to trace its nature or its origin, or to give a just view of its theory and practice, they seem, with the most cautious art, to misrepresent it in all its details, and to declaim with endless pertinacity and wicked ignorance (if it be ignorance) on the injustice, and even against the execution of our laws. It has been asserted that our liberty no longer exists, scarcely even in name. Mr. Pitt has been represented by the French, and it has been universally repeated here in Germany, as a monster who has set the world on fire, and who has succeeded in binding his nation in chains of iron. He has been represented as the bloody despot, at whose nod lie the lives and fortunes of every Briton; and Great Britain has not only been represented as groaning under the most dreadful tyranny of this Minister, but as the supporter of tyranny in Europe; and
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it has been asserted that even the liberty of the press, or the right of endeavouring to alleviate or remove our griefs by communicating them, has been entirely taken from us. When we come to contrast all these shameful misrepresentations, with the candour which they make use of in judging of the conduct and operations of the French, during every period of their Revolution, and amidst all their crying injustices, which they have committed both at home and abroad—is it to be expected that a Nation such as England, justly proud of its constitution and its laws, and in spite of the rage, the envy, and the deceits of its enemies, patriotic in a very high degree, can be free from prejudice, in judging of men in whom they observe so many marks of injustice? For it is when our pride is hurt, or when others are obviously unjust and illiberal in their estimation of us, that we are most inclined to repay their injustice with interest, and their illiberality with contempt; and thus it is, that error is propagated more and more, by the violence and partiality of individuals.

Dr.

Dr. Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, is a very different work from that of Barruel. The author is evidently a friend of rational liberty, a man of learning, and a philosopher: yet he has been most unaccountably treated, both abroad and at home with the most scurrilous abuse, and with the most unwarrantable contempt. Whatever errors he may have been led into, his book, and his conduct respecting some facts stated in it, prove that he is not the exaggerated bigot of a party; that he sincerely sought for the truth, thought he had found it, and that it might be useful to his country; and in every page he exhibits the sentiments, not of a lycophant or of a slave, but of a true free-born Briton.

The abuse and contempt which have been so liberally lavished on this accomplished scholar, both in Germany and in England, could not, even in the estimation of the most impartial Englishmen, promote the end which his opponents have had in view: and in fact, they have contributed, more than any thing else, to convince those who had no other means of information,

information, of the justice of his assertions, and the propriety of his deductions. Even truth will not prevail, at least it will meet with many obstacles, unless it be presented with moderation and candour.

I consider myself as extremely fortunate, therefore, in having it in my power to present to my countrymen, in an English dress, a work on this subject by a man whose name is universally known in Europe, and whose talents, virtue, and moderation, are universally acknowledged. In the turbulent scenes of Revolution, few men, who have taken an active part, retire from public notice with unsullied purity. But if ever, in any public commotion, there was a man who could challenge this honour to himself, I believe this man to be M. Mounier ; and if there exists a man capable of giving an impartial and candid history of the dreadful convulsions of his country, it is he. In the beginning of the Revolution, it is well known he took a very active part, and though his exertions, first to render his country free, and then to pre-

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serve it from falling into anarchy, were unsuccessful, all impartial men have sanctioned his labours with their fullest approbation. His conduct indeed has been often misrepresented; as that of all men in similar circumstances will be; but his numerous works, published at various periods of the Revolution, afford the best answer to the idle accusations of his enemies, and the amplest proof of his integrity and courage, and of the justice and uniformity of his principles. His conduct on the 5th and 6th of October, 1789, shamefully misrepresented by some ignorant calumniators, justly procured him the highest approbation, of which I have had under my own eyes the most positive and unsuspicious proofs; and it can scarcely now be doubted but that had the King, and all those Members of the Assembly who were really well disposed, had the vigour to follow his advice and example which they fully approved, France would have soon been delivered from the influence of those sanguinary

nary monsters whose triumph has been so fatal to that country and to Europe.

It is well known that M. Mounier had long studied liberty in the history of England, and in the works of English publicists; that he thoroughly understood and warmly admired our Constitution; and that he ardently wished to establish something similar in his own country, when the weakness and errors of the Court had rendered some reform absolutely necessary. All these ideas are long since at an end: the opportunity of realising them is past, perhaps for ever, and he has now no system but that of the truth of history to support. The testimony of such a man I therefore consider as highly valuable, and I am fully persuaded that it will be considered as such by my countrymen in general.

I have indeed been told by some of those candid foreigners, whose business it is to misrepresent the conduct of our Government and abuse the spirit of our nation, that it is impossible to publish in England

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any thing that favours of liberty or moderation. Such men, it would appear, can find liberty no where but in France, nor moderation but in the conduct of Bonaparte. Those who know what liberty and moderation really mean, must pity, if they do not despise, such miserable enemies of the British name and nation. Men really impartial, whether foreigners or natives, will readily agree, whatever particular faults may be occasionally found in detail, that the English Nation merits in general the gratitude of all Europe, for the glorious stand she has made against the ruinous principles and practices of the Jacobinical war: and though she has been more steady, more vigorous, and more loyal in her opposition than all the other Governments, whether Absolute, Monarchical, or Aristocratical, together, they will not deny her the privilege of being free; because they well know that none but a free nation, none but the Government of a free people, could have made the exertions which she has uninterruptedly

ruptedly made during the present contest, without irreparably injuring the machine of Government. The most powerful Monarchies of Europe, frequently ill-conducted, and divided in their councils by a thousand mean jealousies, have been overpowered and disheartened by the first reverse; whilst England has risen still more courageous in herself, and more terrible to her foes from under the most awful and threatening circumstances. The reason is, because liberty is still dear to every Briton—because the Constitution is still cherished, and cherishes in its turn sentiments of honour, and of national dignity, which exist no where else. I know that my countrymen, I know that such a people cannot be afraid of hearing the truth when calmly and virtuously presented to them; that though they justly detest Jacobinism, they love the liberty for which their fathers bled, and by means of which their country has risen to its present splendor and greatness, so
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meanly and unjustly envied by the rest of Europe.

The British Constitution is a work of a long experience; and I trust that the calm perusal of the following work, by exhibiting the evils resulting from an undefined Monarchy in weak hands, and the dreadful consequences of popular reform, will impress on the minds of my countrymen a veneration for that Constitution which the wisdom of ages has procured for them, as well as a just suspicion of all those new and dashing theories (however *apparently just and moderate*) which hasty and ignorant men, despising the lessons of experience, have wished to raise on its ruins. St. Paul himself neglected not to take advantage of the privileges belonging to a Roman citizen; and in Great Britain, where the rights and duties both of King and People, of governor and governed, are so happily defined, it is equally for the advantage of both to preserve with religious care the Constitution to which they owe their greatness, their

their security, their honour, and their happiness. But never let it be forgotten, that a violent attempt to change any system of government (even supposing it to be really bad) is a crime of the deepest dye, that the consequences of it must be fatal to many thousands of innocent persons, and will generally be advantageous only to the deceivers and tyrants of the people. Never let it be forgotten, that liberty is a practical good, little likely to be improved by the partial declarations of discontented men, or the dark machinations of secret societies—that it is more easy to find fault than to reform—that if Kings and Magistrates are bound to protect and judge justly their subjects and fellow-citizens, these last are equally bound to respect, to obey, and to assist them—that the only means of enjoying or securing liberty is by rendering their office easy and honourable—and that by rendering them secure of obedience in the exercise of their legal duty, and of that respectful attention which their situation

• demands,

demands, we shall remove from them all real temptation to encroach on our undoubted rights, whilst we shall remain fully entitled and fully qualified to assert those rights, should such encroachments really be attempted.

DRESDEN,
in Upper-Saxony.
25th June, 1801.

INTRODUCTION.

THE Revolution of France has had, down to the present day—it will have in future such a mighty influence on the fate of the people of Europe, that the most phlegmatic minds, the most hard-hearted of men, find it impossible to withdraw their attention from this great and awful spectacle. It is natural to endeavour to discover its causes, with a zeal proportioned to its importance; and, accordingly, its origin has been the object of a multitude of writings, and is the most common topic of conversation. If its causes are well known, this cruel experiment will not be without utility for future times. We shall be better able to judge of mankind, to distinguish what paves the way for the over-

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throw of States, and what is necessary to support order and public tranquillity ; and when imperious circumstances shall require some changes in fundamental laws, we shall know what it is just to grant, and what it is prudent to demand. We shall no longer suppose, that in order to become free, it is sufficient to overthrow with violence the sovereign authority, and place it in other hands, without establishing barriers against the abuse of power. We shall dread Popular Tyranny still more than that of Kings ; we shall no longer confound the characters of Slavery, of Licentiousness, and of Liberty ; we shall no longer believe that we are delivering ourselves from Despotism, by multiplying the number of Despots. But if, unfortunately, we deceive ourselves in this enquiry ; if it have no other result but to make us cherish errors formerly fatal, because they are opposed to the fatal errors of our own days, mankind will have suffered in vain ; they will have changed their road, but it will be to return by various windings into a labyrinth of misfortune.

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After the cruel calamities which have caused the shedding of so much blood and so many tears, nothing could be more lamentable than to see false opinions prevail respecting their causes—nor can it be denied, that this danger now exists.

The mind oppressed by painful recollections feels the necessity of uttering its indignation. It is ready to condemn on the slightest appearances. The majority of men knowing no other means of opposing the evils they dread but by evils of an opposite nature, they wish to combat impiety by superstition; chimerical projects of an absolute equality, by the apology of humiliating distinctions, and of privileges without function; the maxims of licentiousness, by those of slavery; and the false systems of the eighteenth century, by the prejudices of the twelfth.

A great Philosopher has remarked, that truth is always to be found between the two extremes. This axiom is continually repeated, but its just application is always forgotten. Because it has sometimes

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happened,

happened, that timid or selfish men have wished to honour with the name of *moderation* their cowardice or their indifference; it is very commonly believed, that moderate principles are the marks of weakness; whereas, in fact, it is impossible to avoid error, without adopting such principles—and as it requires a great portion of firmness to remain faithful to them, the weak, who are violently attached to exaggerated opinions, pass successively from one to another.

Personal interest, which in the course of the Revolution has occasioned so many crimes, often contributes also to the dissemination of false systems amongst those who wish to explain its origin. If some ferocious individuals, in order to attain power, have shewn themselves insensible to the sufferings of their fellow-creatures, there are others who, thinking the better to secure to themselves the enjoyment of all that flatters their pride, oppose the most useful changes, even when they are no ways hurtful to established governments and to the tranquillity.

quillity of nations. Ther care some to whom abuses are become dearer; who regret those which the science of the age has destroyed; who are obstinately attached to those which it menaces; and who wish they had it in their power to re-establish those from which the people are delivered.

Above all, it has been attempted, for some time past, to attribute the Revolution of France, and all the crimes which it has produced, to the Modern Philosophers, to the Free-Masons, and to the Illuminati. Several works have been published on this subject in France, in Germany, and in England. They have been read with eagerness; and they have made an impression so much the stronger, as, in order to produce it, every thing has been combined which might dispense with the pain of reflexion; every thing which could flatter the love of the marvellous and a variety of prejudices and interests. To causes extremely complicated have been substituted simple causes, adapted to the capacity of the most indolent and superficial minds.

Every one has imagined himself capable of deciding on questions which require long and numerous researches: all explanations have appeared easy; by the help of the words Philosopher, Free-Mason, and Illuminati, every one is ready to accuse, condemn, and account for all events.

Several of these works declare war against every principle of liberty, or rather against human reason. They insult a great number of worthy individuals. I wish to believe, that they who have published them have been deceived by the violence of their zeal, that they have been deceived by the spirit of their party: but he who comes forward as the champion of morality and religion, ought better to observe their precepts. He ought not, on hearsays, on the most frivolous conjectures, to hazard calumnies, and to confound vice and virtue, folly and reason.*

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* *Note of the Author.*—The work of Dr. Robinson, entitled *Proofs of a Conspiracy*, &c. merits a particular exception. It contains facts with respect to which he has been deceived by false accounts, and which have led him to conclusions

OF
The Influence attributed to
Modern Philosophers,
ON THE
REVOLUTION OF FRANCE.

IT is necessary, in the first place, to be agreed on the signification of terms employed. We here use the word *philosopher*, as it is generally used, without regard to its literal signification; we have denominated philosophers amongst us, as was the case among the Greeks and Romans, those who devote themselves to the investigation of truth on subjects the most important to our happiness, who trace the principles of our knowledge and of our duty, who in this great study examine every thing themselves, who are not subservient to the opinions of others, but inculcate with some success the results of their own meditations, not a few combinations founded on prejudices generally received. There are estimable philosophers, and there are philosophers who are not so, according as their doctrine is useful or pernicious. The sensual Epicurus,

curus, the virtuous Socrates, the austere Zeno, the atheist Diagoras, and the shameless Diogenes, were all equally philosophers.

Every thing in the works of men is a mixture of good and of evil; and even every thing which we know in nature has its inconveniences and advantages. It is thus that every object may present two sides to our view; the one a subject for praise, the other for censure. In the eyes of those who are accustomed to reason, the good is found where it surpasses the evil, and the evil, where the inconveniences exceed the advantages: but violent men fix their attention on the side most agreeable to their interests, or to their affections of the moment—whatever is contrary to these, appears horrible to them; whatever is agreeable to their projects, is free from fault. By exaggerating the inconveniences even of that which is good, they will represent them as dreadful; and the advantages of that which is bad, they will represent as sublime. It is thus that Jean-Jacques Rousseau, wishing to seduce by novelty, and keeping in view only the errors of the learned and the evils which they may produce, was led to represent ignorance as more useful than knowledge. It is thus that others, observing only the examples of vigour, of *dévouement*, of virtue, which are to be met with amidst civil broils, have been induced to consider them as a blessing;

bleffing; and that others have, from oppofite reasons, extolled the tranquillity of defpotifm. It is thus that, by prefenting an odious defcription of the evils which have been often occafioned by the diverfity of religions, it has been maintained that we ought to adopt the maxims of intolerance, and punifh opinions as crimes.

According to this mode of reasoning, there is nothing which may not be proferibed—all kinds of ftudy and of pleafure, every thing which merits our gratitude and our refpect, even religion itfelf.—In the name of religion, how many crimes have been committed, how much blood has been fpilt!—If we forget its benefits, if we only trace out the fury of religious fanaticifm, we might conclude, after the example of fome few madmen, in favour of atheifm.

In this refpect, it is with philofophy as with religion; it is eafy to represent it in odious colours. Men are furrounded by fo many illufions, that they are often led into error by their very attempts to acquire information. It is not therefore furprifing that in the writings of philofophers we fo often find ufeful reflexions blended with falfe fyftems. Their doctriues are ftill much more pernicious, when they are not directed in their labours by pure and difintefted motives, when they are more attached to their own celebrity than to the public good, to the defire of
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pleasing, than to that of serving mankind—when they attack ancient principles, not because they are convinced of their falsehood, but for the glory of attaching their names to new theories. We have seen among the philosophers of all countries wretches, whose reason and conscience were weakened by the excess of their pride, who had nevertheless preserved all the gifts of imagination, all the means of persuasion, and who maintained with eloquence opinions conceived in delirium. We have seen some whose minds contracted by selfishness could no longer distinguish the Supreme Intelligence, or the order of the universe—with whom every thing is the work of chance, every thing is uncertain; with whom justice is a mere contract, virtue a calculation of interest, and sensual pleasure the only good.

As in the 18th century science and literature have been more cultivated than in all other ages known to us, it has produced a greater number of dangerous philosophers or of sophists, who have represented the most sacred duties, and the most respectable religious principles, as the prejudices of ignorance.

But it would be the height of ingratitude to consider the labours of philosophers under this single point of view. What is the fate of nations who are without men sufficiently courageous

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to raise themselves above vulgar opinions, or to investigate the prejudices of the multitude? What was Europe before the philosophers of Greece had disseminated the precepts of morality and of legislation which the Romans were eager to adopt? And when the despotism of the Emperors, and afterwards the domination of the barbarians, had again thrown this part of the world into the shades of ignorance, what mitigated by degrees the ferocity of manners, the slavery of the people, and the tyranny of the feudal system, but the restoration of philosophy, that is, the efforts of some men of genius to tread in the steps of the ancient philosophers, and to add to the light which they had transmitted to us?

Before the French Revolution, the philosophers had destroyed in several States that religious intolerance which has occasioned such cruel proscriptions; which, even in the middle of the 18th century, has in France caused so many of persons to languish in prison, because, on the subject of *grace*, they could not think as the Pope and the King; which, in the same period and in the same country, has caused the ministers of the Protestant religion to be put to death with all the apparatus of justice—has caused children to be torn from the arms of their mothers,

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In order to be educated in the established faith; and by a tyrannical refinement has caused it to be supposed that there existed only Roman Catholics in the country; which has branded the wives of the Protestants with the name of concubines, and considered their children as the offspring of licentiousness. Our philosophers had caused the Inquisition of Spain, of Portugal and Italy, to blush at their sacrifices of human blood. Though they had not the means of destroying all their power, they had at least extinguished their fires, and broken the swords of their executioners: they had diminished, in the Roman Catholic countries, the number of those who, from a superstitious zeal, or from the effect of seduction and the avarice of their families, buried themselves for ever in monasteries, were guilty of a civil and moral suicide, and exposed themselves, if they should not retain the same opinions, to pass their lives in despair. They had induced the Sovereigns to multiply, in the tribunals, the precautions in favour of innocence; they had caused the suppression of the rack in the greatest part of Europe; they had occasioned a mitigation of cruelty in punishments; they had solicited, and often with success, greater attention to the useful arts, greater protection to agriculture, more pity for the unfortunate; they

they had demonstrated the injustice of the slavery of the negroes, and forced all men, who have not the hearts of tigers, to desire its slow and gradual abolition, by avoiding all violence, by guarding the masters against ruin, and by securing them against all danger from the resentment or the ferocity of their slaves. The philosophers were still unable, however, notwithstanding all their efforts, to obtain in France the abolition of a great number of useless offices and privileges enjoyed by a number of idle persons, under the pretence that some one of their ancestors had possessed a fief, had been armed a knight, or had bought an office. They had not been able to suppress the rights of personal slavery, which still oppressed the country people in several provinces; they had in effectually solicited permission for the copyholders to redeem the perpetual taxes levied on their possessions; they had not been able to put an end to the depredations in the finances, to the oppressive system of general farms, * to the partiality of the tribunals with respect to the crimes of persons

* The King of France farmed the greatest part of the revenues of the State to a Company for a certain sum; and this Company multiplied the vexations, in order to enhance its profits: it was this Company which formed what was called *les Fermes Générales*.

sons whose families enjoyed some influence, to the scandalous venality of offices, to arbitrary decisions, to the multitude of lawyers, to the obscurity of the laws, to the absolute want of security for men without power and without fortune, who were always liable to imprisonment at the will of the military power, at the will of a hundred civil authorities contending which should exhibit the greatest power.

Such are the titles to glory of the philosophy of the 18th century. I grant, we may censure the stupid respect of the vulgar for talents misemployed; we may censure the admiration of fools for a false eloquence destined to embellish paradoxes, or to destroy the foundation of morality; we may consign to contempt that crowd of poets, vile flatterers of the vices of the great, who exert themselves to render modesty and conjugal fidelity ridiculous, who extol adultery, prostitution, the corruption of innocence and the perfidy of seducers. Yes, doubtless, it is now high time to inculcate right notions with respect to true glory, that the ornaments of language alone may no longer suffice to render a writer illustrious; that good sense, that morality, may be the indispensable titles to public esteem, without which all writers should be considered as dangerous citizens. And what, indeed, is the talent

talent of writing, without a zeal for truth, without the love of virtue? A dangerous art, which may be united with baseness of mind, with an odious selfishness, with false genius, with a derangement of the ideas approaching to madness. The obscure man, who judges rationally and whose intentions are pure, is a thousand times preferable to those who, having it in their power to consecrate to the service of their fellow-creatures the happy gifts which are denominated wit or genius, reserve them exclusively as means of fortune, or in order to obtain applause. But in condemning those authors who have had no other object but to excite the passions, we ought to be on our guard lest we confound them with those who, by their useful writings, have been the benefactors of the human race; we ought to be able to distinguish, even in the works of those philosophers who are accused of the most pernicious errors, whatever may merit the approbation of worthy men. Plato, who maintained so absurd a theory in his work on the Republic, had forgot his foolish and eloquent reveries, when he presented to his disciple Dion a plan of government for Syracuse: this plan contained ideas less brilliant and less new; but for that very reason more wise, better adapted to promote the happiness of the Syracusans, if they had then

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been worthy of freedom. We may reproach Voltaire for having attacked the most respectable principles; for having professed, with an odious fanaticism, a contempt for all religions; for having insulted modesty, and been the apologist of luxury and voluptuousness; for having so far debased himself, as to lavish praises on unjust but powerful individuals; for having often loaded with imprecations and gross abuse those who refuted his opinions, or refused to render him homage. But let us not forget that Voltaire has overthrown superstition and intolerance; that he has often defended the rights of the unfortunate, that he has constantly struggled against barbarous prejudices, and has never ceased to recommend peace and indulgence. We may reproach Jean Jacques Rousseau with having misapplied that lively sensibility which he had received from nature, by having his thoughts too much engaged about himself, by preferring himself to all who surrounded him; for having never had either a friend or a mistress, after being the most eloquent painter of the human heart; for having abandoned his children, and confounded them with the offspring of debauchery, after having pointed out, in so interesting a style, the duties of fathers. We may reproach him with having preferred the fierce independence of savages to the advantages

vantages of civilization; for having presented also on that subject obscure and chimerical reveries; in short, for having dared to call himself a virtuous man, after having in the history of his life accused himself of many criminal actions. But let us take advantage of his happy contradictions: observe with what energy he condemns atheism, how he leads us to love the duties of a citizen, of a spouse, and of a parent; what a thorough contempt he inspires for corrupted manners; how he forms the heart to pity; how he paints the ravages of luxury, the evils occasioned by the frivolity of the great world, the bad employment of riches, and the sophistry of philosophers. Read his *Emilia*, and, in spite of the errors it contains, you are to be pitied if you do not feel the necessity of amendment.

Instead therefore of proscribing philosophers, enlightened men ought to turn to account every thing just and useful which their meditations may furnish. They ought to guard the young against the poison of false doctrines; and when their age and their education enable them to judge for themselves, they ought to exercise them in separating with discernment truth from error, and in refuting the declamations which, under a seducing appearance, disguise
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false paradoxes. I acknowledge that corrupt and passionate men will easily suffer themselves to be misled by a blind respect for the sophism of some celebrated philosophers. This inconvenience is inevitable ; but, without philosophy, they would be misled still oftener. For one false opinion to which philosophy has given rise, you may reckon a thousand baneful prejudices which she has overcome. Let us not destroy the plant which nourishes us, because it also nourishes venomous animals. Suppose even that we had reason to lay to the account of philosophy all the evils produced by the Revolution of France, must we therefore never mention it but with horror ? and must we therefore put a stop, for the future, to the investigation of truth ? Will not this woeful experience be a serious subject of meditation for the philosophers themselves ? What should we say of a man who, because his eyes have deceived him, should condemn himself to become blind, in order to avoid being deceived a second time ?

When men exclaim that there never were such atrocities, they express a proper indignation, a just surprise, that in an age so enlightened they could have been committed ; but they who are acquainted with history do not pretend that the times of ignorance were free from commotions and from crimes ;

crimes ; they know that the cruelties committed during the captivity of King John, during the quarrels of the Bourignons and of the Armagnacs, and those of the leaguers and of the Protestants, were not commanded by philosophers *. We should make a wide distinction between the errors which proceed from philosophy, and those which result from ignorance. The effects of the former may point out to philosophers the right road ; whereas a long succession of ages is necessary to conduct a people from a state of barbarism, and to revive the taste for science in those countries wherein the liberty of thought and of speech has been destroyed for the interest of despotism.

Is it then true that the philosophers have begun the destruction of the ancient form of Government in France ? I know that this assertion is generally maintained, both by those who wish to do them honour, and by those who reproach them with it as a crime ; but I believe

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* *Note of the Author.*—When the Duke of Bourgogne caused ten thousand persons to be put to death in the capital, and when a savage populace took a pleasure in tearing men to pieces, in burning and roasting them alive, there was no reason to complain of the philosophical spirit—for a Bourguignon soldier having struck a statue of the Virgin with his sword, the people murdered him, and readily believed that the blood had spouted from the statue under the stroke of the impious soldier.

the Revolution has been produced by circumstances with which they can have no connexion. I shall now retrace them as rapidly as I can—and the motives which determine my opinion may then be fairly judged of.

The fall of the ancient government was preceded by a slow and gradual diminution of the authority of the Monarch. The higher courts of justice were become the rivals of the Throne, after having been the instruments of its power—they had succeeded in forming themselves into independent bodies, in reserving to themselves the choice of their members, as well as the investigation of the charges brought against them. The edicts published by the Prince did not become laws but by their approbation. They observed these laws only so far as they thought proper; they themselves made laws without waiting for the King's approbation; they punished such of his agents as refused to acknowledge their supremacy. They could, without danger, violate all the forms which protected innocence, when they were deciding, for their own interest, against persons who exposed themselves to their hatred, by contesting the legitimacy of their powers. * It is well known that
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* *Note of the Author.*—No advantages could, in the opinion of enlightened men, counterbalance the dreadful inconvenience

one of the objects most generally interesting to the multitude, is that of the diminution of taxes. The Parliaments had therefore acquired great popularity by their resistance to the new taxes; and the royal authority had in proportion lost its popularity under Louis XV, by the bad management of the revenue, by the oppressive taxes and scandalous morals of that Prince and of the greatest part of his courtiers. He resolved to put an end to the power of the courts of justice; but it was in order to save a guilty person—and the public opinion was in their favour. Louis XVI. yielding to the entreaties of those who surrounded him, was so imprudent as to re-establish the tribunals on their former footing: this triumph gave them greater influence and rendered them more insolent. It was not impossible for the royal authority to get rid

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inconvenience of these bodies, superior to the laws, and subject to no responsibility, enjoying the power of life and death over the citizen, and composed of men who had purchased their offices. There were amongst them many Judges whose intentions were pure, and whose knowledge was very extensive; but we may say in general of the Parliament of France, what they themselves said of the Jesuits, That, in spite of the respectable characters of a great number of individuals, there was in their constitution an essential defect which subjected them all to the desire of increasing their power.

them a second time. It was necessary for the Prince to adopt the same measures which, in the same centuries, had destroyed the independence of the possessors of fiefs: it was necessary to conciliate the affection of the people, to protect, on all occasions, the liberty of individuals against arbitrary decisions, to diminish the taxes, and retrench useless expences. Unfortunately Louis XVI, with the purest intentions, had no firmness in the execution of his plans. One of his Ministers, the virtuous Turgot, wished to suppress the *corvées* on the high roads, and to make all proprietors contribute to their construction. The Parliament of Paris exclaimed that they were about to overturn the Monarchy by the confusion of ranks; and Turgot, who proposed to bring about, gradually and without hurting the proprietors of fiefs, the enfranchisement of lands and persons, was sacrificed to the clamours of the Parliaments and of privileged individuals. Necker, who wished that the legislator might no longer have to compound with thirteen Parliaments—who, above all, neglected no means of introducing economy into the expenditure, was deprived of his situation in spite of the general esteem which he enjoyed. Prodigality again prevailed: the Ministers deceived the people, by announcing a prosperity which

which did not exist, and even the approaching extinction of the public debt. Whilst the nation was under this delusion, the disorder in the finances increased to such a pitch that it became at length necessary to reveal the fatal secret, and to employ some means of obtaining new taxes. It was resolved to increase the contributions of the privileged orders.—The resistance of the Parliaments was expected; but it was thought possible to prevent it by convoking an assembly of the Notables, composed in the manner best adapted to second the interest of the Court. This assembly however was hostile, and by no means concealed its dissatisfaction. A general cry of indignation arose throughout France.—M. de Calonne was dismissed from the Ministry.—Brienne took his place, and wished to force the Parliaments to sanction new taxes. The Parliament of Paris, irritated because the Court refused to submit to their examination the state of the receipts and of the expenditure, suddenly had recourse to the old doctrine so long forgotten, according to which the King ought to confine himself to the revenues of his own domains, and could obtain no subsidy without the free consent of the contributors; they demanded a convocation of the States General, which had not been assembled since 1614. This proposition

proposition was repeated by the other tribunals, and was received with transport by all the orders of the State; those even who were the most inimical to the too great authority of the Judges, thought they saw in the convocation of an assembly of the Representatives of the People, the means of obtaining, without tumult, a free Constitution, of putting an end to the confusion of powers, which rendered a reform of abuses impossible; which did not indeed expose the citizens to a cruel tyranny, then incompatible with the manners and the learning of the nation, but which favoured the disorder in the finances, established an arbitrary power instead of the authority of the laws, deprived the Government of all energy, rendered its administration feeble and uncertain, and raised uneasiness and discontent among all classes of the people.

Since the higher Judges themselves, whose duty it was to render the People obedient to the King, called upon them to resist, there were no longer any means of safety for the Prince, but in yielding to the wishes of the Nation, and in hastening to treat with a number of proprietors sufficiently considerable to form a strong party in his favour. Almost all the former Sates General had been of little importance, because it was possible to do without their subsidies;

sides; and then the revenues of the royal domains were in general sufficient for the wants of the Exchequer: but the new States General, whatever might be their composition, were about to become the dispensers of the whole public revenue, and consequently masters of the main springs of authority. The whole nation demanded that they should be periodical; that they should partake, with the King, of the legislative power; and that the Ministers should be responsible.

If the Prince had conducted himself with firmness and prudence, the Monarchy, till that time simple in appearance, but in reality aristocratical, might have escaped destruction; but it was necessarily to receive a mixture of democracy; and its fall was inevitable, if, in such a crisis, it injudiciously struggled against the wishes of the people. The Ministers resolved to allay the storm:—they undertook to restore the King to unlimited power, by absurd and odious laws, which contained some salutary regulations. They saw the clergy, the nobility, the metropolis, the majority of the towns in France, all the tribunals, and even a great number of courtiers, declare against them. They ordered the troops to march:—the officers requested the soldiers to protect the discontented; and the public

public opinion condemned to infamy, those who declared for obedience. All means of coercion died away, in the hands of the agents of the Monarch. He was obliged to yield : he was obliged solemnly to promise the convocation of the States-General, and to dismiss the Ministers, become the objects of the hatred of all Frenchmen.

Thus we find a Revolution rendered necessary, by causes which have not the slightest connexion with philosophers. Is it philosophy which created the venality of the places of the judges, their pretensions, and their differences with the crown? Is it philosophy which produced the ruin of the finances? Is it the philosophers alone who have taken advantage of these circumstances, in order to endeavour to fix limits to the power of the Monarch, in order to obtain a national participation in the establishment of the laws and taxes? We must in this case consider as philosophers, all the members of the parliaments, those of the assembly of the clergy of France, who made energetic remonstrances to the King in order to second the wishes of the people—all those who possessed any principles of justice, and any sentiments of humanity : for all men of honour, not only in France, but even in every part of Europe,

Europe, have applauded this unanimous association of the French, which was believed to be directed towards liberty and happiness. I know that very few persons have the candour to avow at present the opinion they then entertained : but let such of my readers as wish to be impartial, consult, on this subject, their conscience and their memory.

If the French had only had ideas of passive obedience, it would have been easy for the King to overcome the resistance of the tribunals, and the people would have remained cold spectators of their quarrels. But for a long time past they had been lovers of liberty, without having any exact knowledge of it, without having foreseen that they would one day have an opportunity of attaining it ; and when this opportunity presented itself, it was seized on with an enthusiasm which paralyzed all the forces of the Monarchy. It has been said that this general desire of liberty was inspired by the philosophers—But is liberty then an invention of modern times ? Is there not, in all men, a sentiment which tells them that they are not born to be the sport of the caprices of their fellow-creatures ? that they do not exist for the government, but that the government exists for them ? that they are bound to submit to fixed rules established for the general good, and not for the interest of an individual,

vidual, or of a particular class? Unless the sentiments have been depraved by a long habit of superstition and slavery, it is easy for them to discover, that they derive from Nature the right to life, to honour, to property, and to the free use of their faculties, in whatever is not injurious to their fellow-creatures, and is not contrary to moral order. The respect for these natural rights, the protection which the State grants them, constitute *civil liberty*, which is binding on all governments, monarchical and republican: and if it happen that this liberty be often infringed, the people are disposed to take advantage of all favourable circumstances, in order to guarantee it by political liberty; that is, by the limits with which they surround the power which has deviated from justice*.

The Roman people had no occasion for philosophers, in order to retire to the sacred Mount. William Tell had not read any philosophical work, when he was enraged at the insolence of the Bailly Gessler, and when he determined to brave the tyrant. The Constitution of England, and the Revolution of the United States of America, have contributed much

* "Our own feelings tell us how long they ought to have submitted, and at what moment it would have been treachery to themselves not to have resisted."

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much more than modern philosophy to diffuse throughout France ideas of liberty. These ideas were especially maintained by the remonstrances of the Parliaments, who often opposed to the will of the King even exaggerated principles, and dangerous maxims; but who certainly cannot be fairly accused of being partial to the philosophers, since they caused their works to be burnt.

It is true indeed, that the more enlightened men become, the more difficult it becomes to keep them in slavery; and that Philosophy, by instructing man in his rights, strengthens him in his love of liberty: and this is the reason why tyrants have always made such great efforts to brutify the human species. Since the revival of learning, the lot of the inhabitants of Europe has become gradually better. The misfortunes produced by false ideas of liberty, ought to make us feel more sensibly the true value of that which is real, and not lead us to regret the barbarism of the times of ignorance, or envy the miserable situation of the stupid inhabitants of Asia, who have languished for so many ages under the yoke of despotism.

How absurd is it to suppose that the Revolution of France is the result of a conspiracy! I here appeal to the candour of all impartial Frenchmen. Nobody in France thought, in

1787.

1787, of the means of changing the government. They censured, they ridiculed the errors of administration, but they took no means to prevent them.

A work which seems to have been well received, accuses a Committee which sat, as is said, in the house of the Baron d'Holbach, The learned La Harpe, the keeper of the seals Lamoignon, and M. de Grimm of Gotha, are named amongst the members of this committee. The first of these has never taken any part in the Revolution: he was for a long time proscribed for having condemned its excesses. The second used every exertion to prevent the States General from assembling, and to render the power of Louis XVI. absolute: he laid violent hands on himself through despair, for having received no other reward for his labours but the public detestation. M. de Grimm left France during the Revolution, and he is still in the service of the Emperor of Russia.

The Economists, the majority of whom were respectable men, are also accused. This philosophical sect, which has incurred blame merely on account of its theory of a single tax on land, of the emphatical tone of its writers, and the ridiculous affectation of their expressions—to whom, however, we owe many important observations on the abuses injurious to industry, and on the means of augmenting

menting the public prosperity—this sect, in general, held principles very opposite to those of the Revolution, and such even as were by no means favourable to political liberty. The Economists wished to establish the greatest possible respect for property—they wished that Industry should be freed from all its fetters, that men should be treated with justice—but they wished for *unity of power—a legal despotism*. It is thus they denominated the authority of a Monarch who should cause to be observed *the great natural law of respect for property*, of which the positive laws should only be the developement. The power of the Sovereign was to be only tempered by the influence of learning, and by his personal interest in *the generality of the advances* *. He was always to have a property in a part of the net product of all the lands. The Economists did not disapprove of National Assemblies, but they did not consent that they should determine on the taxes: they left them no other rights but the care of pointing out ameliorations, and of receiving the perpetual revenues of the Sovereign.—See *L'Instruction populaire*

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* The Economists gave the name of *advances* to all agricultural labours; they called *net product*, the profit of the farmer over and above all his expences in labouring and sowing.

laire sur les Droits et les Devoirs de l'Homme, printed in 1774. Some ancient Economists have deviated from this doctrine in the course of the Revolution: but so many ecclesiastics, so many military men, have shewn a zeal for democratical principles—Will it, therefore, be said that religion and the army were schools of democracy?

Some individuals who lamented the unfortunate situation of the negroes, and who wished for their emancipation, had formed, at Paris, a committee, under the name of *The Friends of the Blacks*. They did not, perhaps, sufficiently consider the sad necessity of acting with deliberation, while attempting to repair former evils, in order to avoid causing new ones: but their intention, at least, merited the respect of all true Christians—of honest men of all opinions. Because many of these Friends of the Blacks, some misled by the effervescence of their zeal for their fellow-creatures, others by pride or ambition, have, in the course of the commotions of France, protected crimes or maintained dangerous systems, the apologists of slavery now assert, that they had prepared the Revolution. They forget that persons, who were formerly members of this society, have defended the justest principles, and displayed the greatest courage—they forget that neither the Friends of
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the Blacks, nor the pretended Committee of Baron d'Holbach, had it in their power to cause the ruin of the finances, or to direct the deliberations of the Notables, of the Tribunals, of the Clergy, and of the Noblesse.

I cannot deny but that, among those who were called philosophers, there were some who, deceived by the literal sense of the word Liberty, considered it as an exemption from all constraint; and, while attacking the despotism of *one*, published maxims favourable to the despotism of *the many*: but I complain of the pains which have been taken to confound these with the friends of true liberty, which is nothing more than a combination of the means necessary for the protection of justice.

We see placed in the same conspiracy those who extolled the principles of the British Constitution, the Economists who detested it, and J. J. Rousseau who considered the English as slaves; even the illustrious Montesquieu was, it is said, a conspirator. He had maintained that the judicial power would be too formidable in the hands of a King, and that the Monarch ought never to fill the office of Judge. A French writer, who has published in London four volumes on the pretended conspiracies which have produced the Revolution of France, has considered this doctrine as criminal. He thinks

that men cannot be too subservient to the authority of Princes. He imagines he has revealed to the world the infamy of Montesquieu, because he had discovered that this great man wished the destruction of the Jesuits; that he accused them of transforming the Christian Monarchs into despots; and that he wished at least to preserve to his country the little liberty which it enjoyed. In the *Spirit of Laws*, one of the most beautiful works which this century has produced, there are doubtless some defects, some maxims hazarded: the abuses of the French Monarchy are therein too much set forth as the essential bases of all simple Monarchies; but there is not a single word which could encourage the violent overthrow of the order established in any government; much less, the transporting an unlimited democracy into the midst of a vast country, corrupted by habits of luxury and effeminacy.

Because Montesquieu, in a chapter on the Constitution of England, has said, That he did not enquire whether the English really enjoyed liberty, and that it was enough for his design, if it were established by the laws—the writer whom we have mentioned, pretends that he did not look upon the English as free: but, as he only proposed in that chapter to analyse principles,

principles, he was bound, in order to avoid too many details, to defer the examination of their effects. This examination is to be found in the 27th chapter of the 19th book. "Let us see," says he, "the effects which the principles of the Constitution ought to produce amongst a free people." Hence he derives all the customs prevailing in England, the principal features of the national character, and he maintains that the customs of the English form a part of their liberty. He adds: "This Nation would love its liberty, because it would be real; she would burden herself with the heaviest taxes, such as the most absolute despotism would not dare to establish, if any foreign Power should endanger the prosperity or glory of the State—for then the lesser interests yielding to the greater, all would be united in favour of the executive power."

In order to prove that Voltaire had entered into a conspiracy against the Monarchical Government, verses of his tragedies, in favour of liberty, have been quoted; but, by the same means, it might have been proved that he was a good Christian; and we might find an apology for assassination, in the verses of Racine and Corneille. We could scarcely expect to see marked out as a criminal reflexion, this—*That*

Kings are of the same species as other men. After this, we cannot be surprised at finding him accused of having esteemed the United Provinces, and of having blamed the wars of Frederick II. Thus, in order to avoid being rebels, we must believe that the faults of Princes ought never to be censured, not even the crimes of a war undertaken through ambition; we shall not be permitted to love a happy Republic as much as a well-directed Monarchy; and we ought to adopt revolutionary principles against every Government which shall not happen to be in the hands of a King.

Voltaire cannot be placed among the number of the steady friends of liberty: he attached too high a value to luxury and elegance of manners; he was too great a flatterer of men in power. Whilst he was living at the very gates of Geneva, he saw nothing in the political questions which divided the citizens, but a subject for satire, nothing but a ridiculous quarrel. If he had really been a friend of liberty, he would have taken advantage of this circumstance, in order to study its effects, to judge of the causes which render it tempestuous, and the means of reconciling it with the public tranquillity—in order to distinguish the defects and the advantages of the Constitution of a small Republic, so respectable for the patriotism, the morality, and learning of its inhabitants.

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In those unfortunate moments, no other vice or virtue is known but that of being the enemy or the partisan of such or such a political system—the slightest difference of opinion is sufficient to consign to calumny men worthy of eternal veneration. The good, the respectable Maleherbes is also numbered among the conspiring philosophers; he is accused of having been favourable to the liberty of the press. The French author who accuses him (and who writes in England), has indeed condescended to allow the English the advantages of this liberty: but, doing the honours of his own nation, he supposes her unworthy of publishing her thoughts without the approbation of an arbitrary authority. Maleherbes, the generous champion of *justice*, could not be of such an opinion—the enemy of *lettres-de-cachet* could not partake of that terror with which truth inspires tyrants. The Government might have placed itself in a situation where it might no longer have had cause to fear it, by directing all its efforts towards the good of the people, by putting an end to all useless expences, by suspending the sceptre of the law over all the subjects of the Monarch, without distinction, as was recommended by the President Dupaty, whose memory I am surprised that the apologists of slavery have forgot to honour, by

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inscribing his name in their list of conspirators, Malesherbes, they further remark, according to a letter of D'Alembert, had permitted, with regret, the circulation of several religious works. These works must then have been very fanatical, very dangerous for the public tranquillity; for the sensible and tolerating mind of Malesherbes was inaccessible to all spirit of party. None of those who knew him, can be ignorant that it was impossible to unite greater simplicity of character to greater nobleness of sentiments. Finally, he has been accused of having said, in his remonstrances, presented to Louis XV, in 1771, in the name of the *Cour des Aides* * of Paris, that it was necessary to apply to the nation, since there was no resource left for its defence. Whatever be the form of Government, ought it not to render the people happy? and can this be attained by acting contrary to their opinions? Malesherbes was too enlightened to believe that the people could be acquainted with their own interests, when they tumultuously interfered with the administration of the State. He was never the partisan of anarchy, of an unbounded democracy; he fell a victim to the

* A court of justice, which settled all disputes between the collectors of taxes and the people; of which court Malesherbes was then the first President.

the demagogues, because he would not be mean enough to flatter their pride—he who had preserved the character of an independent man even in the court of Kings. When, therefore, he proposed to take the sense of the nation, he supposed that means would be taken to discover its unbiassed and serious wishes.

If we are to believe the majority of those who have written on the causes of the Revolution, the influence of the things and persons which have most contributed to produce it, was nothing in comparison with that with M. Necker, Administrator of the Finances. “He was from Geneva,” says Dr. Robison, “and he wished to carry into France the institutions of his Republic;” But it is not necessary to be of Geneva in order to love a republican government; and if M. Necker loved that of his country, of which many Genevese doubted, he was not so very ignorant as to suppose that twenty-five millions of men could be governed like twenty-five thousand. During his first ministry, there was no reason to suspect that he was an enemy to the royal authority; on the contrary, he exerted himself to the utmost to uphold it: he had increased the credit of the public treasury, and consequently the power of the Crown; he had obtained the homage of the courts of justice,

rice, the determined censors of all the measures of the King's ministers. He was accused, at that time, of being attached to absolute monarchy; whilst, however, it was acknowledged, that at least he wished to render it subservient to the public good. At present he is accused of having, during his first ministry, ruined the finances by loans. But were those loans blameable, when the French Government, engaged in a war for the independence of the United States of America, were in want of sufficient resources — when the privileged orders still opposed the equality of subsidies, and when it was no longer possible to establish new ones? Was it not better to borrow for the moment of necessity, and procure, by a wise economy, the means of paying the interest of the debt, and of gradually paying it off? Was it the fault of M. Necker if the public treasury was exhausted? He was not, at that time, of the King's Council—he had had no concern in the resolution for declaring war. But it is further remarked, that the conditions of those loans were burdensome to the State. This is possible; but it was not in his power to obtain terms more favourable: what proves it is, that the greatest part of the funds were furnished by foreigners.

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How far the rage of party will go ! A French clergyman has dared to say, that “ Necker having starved the people in order to bring about the Revolution, was very capable of ruining the finances with the same view.” Thus the man whose probity and whose talents all France has celebrated, and whose administration she has blessed, whilst civil broils opposed no obstacles to his plans of order and economy, was a monster capable of ruining France during his first administration, and of condemning the people to famine, merely for the pleasure of overturning his adopted country during the second. He whom I have myself seen reject with horror the proposition of buying the votes of some false friends of the people—whom I have blamed for having reckoned too much on the influence of reason—for having yielded too much to the factious, through the desire of sparing human blood, and for having dreaded too much a civil war—this man wished then to destroy thousands of innocents by famine, when he was afraid of destroying a single one by the sword ! Do you not perceive that you here employ for your systems the very means made use of by the wretches who have dishonoured the Revolution ? Some furious monsters, in 1789, massacred Berthier, Intendant of Paris, under the pretence that he had

had hoarded up the grain in order to occasion a famine. In forming magazines, he had seconded the intentions of Necker. Do not, therefore, blame those madmen for having believed the unfortunate Berthier capable of such a crime, since you make the same charge against him whose orders he executed.

As if every thing had combined to surround the Revolution with causes of disorder, there was, in 1789 and 1790, a want of provisions. M. Necker hastened to purchase corn abroad, in order to form magazines; and he determined to delay the sale as long as possible, in order to husband the resources. The author of the *Memoirs of Jacobinism* quotes the testimony of a magistrate of Rouen:—"This parliament," says he, "had solicited permission to sell the grain which was in the magazines of Normandy"—M. Necker refused it; therefore, says this writer, "he wished to starve the people."

Is it necessary to reply to other calumnies respecting the origin of M. Necker's fortune?—no, calumnies still more horrible against his virtuous wife, whose most constant occupation was that of succouring innocence; and who, during the course of the revolution, partook so feelingly of the sufferings of the victims? In order to prove that she encouraged the crimes of the 5th and 6th of October, notes, forged by imposture,

tute, have been quoted. Her daughter also is accused of having affected to smile on the 3th of October, 1789, in the midst of the general consternation: and nevertheless such of her enemies as know her are forced to acknowledge, in spite of all their accusations, that she possesses the virtue of pity, and that she is ever ready to assist the unfortunate. But let us not refute such lies—let fanaticism exhaust her fury—she will only deceive other fanatics incapable of comprehending us.

It is asserted that our philosophers have, in their writings, diffused principles of equality, which have contributed to produce the Revolution. I shall offer, on this occasion, some reflexions which seem to me necessary, in order to appreciate the justice or injustice of this reproach. Men, considered as free from all political connexion, are equal in rights, and are unequal only in force—that is, that one cannot exact any thing of the conscience of another, which this latter may not exact of his. The end of civil government being to protect justice, it ought to destroy the inequality of individual force, by establishing a public force, in order to cause the equality of natural rights to be respected: but a public force cannot be established without creating an inequality of powers; that is, with-

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out creating functions with particular authority and prerogatives. All men, indiscriminately, are not capable of fulfilling these functions. It is just, however, not to preclude from access to them, any of those who may be worthy of exercising them : for every privilege, which is not necessary to the maintenance of good order, is contrary to justice ; because justice requires that the same advantages should exist for all the members of the community, as far as the safety of the community will permit. The only rational exclusions in the distribution of employments, are those which have for their object the ascertaining the talents and the probity of the public officers, and their interest in the prosperity of the State. In this last view, it may be necessary, for many important functions, to require of the candidates a certain amount of acquired property, as a security for their future conduct—as a pledge of their independence. There are even forms of government where some dignities ought to be hereditary, because election would have still greater inconveniences than inheritance.—Such is the dignity of Kings in Monarchies, and that of the Peers of the British Isles.

There is then, in all forms of government, an inequality of power with respect to functions,
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and some inequality of political rights, with respect to admission into employments—but there is more especially a great inequality absolutely inevitable, in consequences of the right of property. The natural right of property is doubtless the same for all men; they are all susceptible of acquiring what nobody yet possesses, or of exchanging the productions of their industry; but the properties acquired cannot be similar—their amount depends on a greater or less activity, or on talents and circumstances more or less favourable. The development of our faculties depends essentially on this unequal distribution of riches; the source of many inconveniencies, but at the same time the indispensable basis of all social order, and the chief spring of all exertions both of body and mind.

Thus when some philosophers have said, that justice is one and the same for all men; that they ought to be equal in the eye of the law as before God, in whatever is not relative to public functions; when they have condemned the multitude of burdensome privileges, created for private interests; when they have said, that the inequality of riches and of power by no means authorises us to forget our natural equality, or allows us to despise and debase those who are not possessed of the same advantages—they have delivered

delivered useful truths, and have done their duty. But when some enthusiasts have condemned the inequality of fortunes; when they have published extravagant reveries on the partition or community of property; when they have supposed it possible to live without magistrates, or that all men are capable of becoming magistrates; that all men ought to deliberate on the affairs of the State, however poor or ignorant they may be, and that the decision ought always to depend on the plurality of their votes—they have inculcated the most dangerous errors. In speaking of this sort of equality, Raynal said, “ That to endeavour to establish it, would be to let tigers loose.” But the works containing such principles had not the slightest influence before the Revolution. The multitude either did not read, or did not comprehend them. The Discourse of J. J. Rousseau on the Inequality, and the Dissertation of Mably on the Natural Order of Societies, were, in the estimation of the majority of readers, considered merely as brilliant declamations, and as pieces of wit, which did not call for a serious examination, and which excited no greater attention than the Utopia of Sir Thomas More.

The love of equality is not, any more than liberty, an invention of modern times: it is a natural inclination

inclination of the human heart, which must be regulated and conciliated with public order. Wherever the principles of justice are forgotten, men in power exert themselves to destroy this inclination, and to debase their fellow-creatures, in order to raise themselves above them. There are even countries so very barbarous, that the lowest class of the people are more vile than the vilest of animals. But in proportion as civilization increases, enquiry is made into this excess of pride and baseness; a period arrives when, without losing sight of the respect due to the memory of great men, and the advantage which results from it to their families, it will be no longer agreed to acknowledge in their descendants the right of humiliating others, in consequence of a merit which is not personal; when the antiquity of power or of privileges will be no longer confounded with real dignities. When commerce and industry have thrown a part of the riches of a country into the hands of those who are not called *noble*, and when they have no longer any superiors either in learning or in sentiments of honour, it becomes gradually necessary to admit them to the same advantages. It is thus that for a long time past, in England, a liberal education, without any genealogical vouchers, confers the quality of *gentleman*. The same tendency to a

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moderate equality, of which we have just pointed out the characteristics, is at present to be remarked throughout the whole of Europe: it is the inevitable consequence of the progress of the human mind. It may, in future, occasion successive changes in different States, but it cannot overturn any government which has not already in itself other causes of destruction.

We are told, it is particularly by occasioning the suppression of the Order of the Jesuits, that the modern philosophers have brought about the Revolution of France: it is very true that this Order was odious to them: many of its members were respectable for their intentions; many had rendered great services to literature; but their institutions in general inspired them with a spirit of ambition, of intrigue, and of *espionage*, for the interest of their Order; and this interest prevailed over all their duties. Passive instruments of the will of their chiefs, they became, in politics, the apologists of despotism, and, in religion, of the infallibility of the Pope. It was not the philosophers who occasioned the suppression of this monastic order: they wished, they applauded it: but it was the consequence of the hatred which several governments had conceived for them; for the Jesuits worried with their intrigues the authorities which

which they did not direct. In France their fall was the work of the Parliaments, by which they were much more detested than by the philosophers.

It is curious to recur to the former accusations against the Jesuits, now that they are represented as columns necessary to sustain the edifice of public order. The Parliament of Paris, in an *Arrêt* of the year 1762, accused them of being entirely occupied with the care of enriching themselves by commerce, whilst they affected a contempt of riches; of having formed a great number of conspiracies; of having caused the assassination of several Princes; of having caused themselves to be expelled from Venice in 1606, from Bohemia in 1618, from Malta in 1643, from Russia in 1723, from Portugal in 1759. They published extracts from the works of their divines, under the title of Assertion. Their opinions, said the Parliament of Brittany, *dans son compte rendu*, tended to destroy the precepts of natural law, the faith of contracts, the respect due to the civil laws, and to all the bonds of society: they destroyed (continued the Parliament) the royal authority, overturned States, and preached up regicide.* Thus, the former

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* These accusations against the Jesuits do not contradict those which have been generally made of their favouring the

Magistrates of France laid to the charge of the Jesuits exactly the same crimes as the friends of the latter at present lay to the charge of the modern philosophers. Doubtless some of these reproaches were exaggerated, and others taken in too general a sense. The innocent Jesuits could not answer for the faults of their colleagues, no more than the true philosophers can answer for the absurdities of the sophists: but a corporation which contains many dangerous members, ought to be dissolved by the public authority; and if the philosophers formed a society which had its chiefs, its rulers, secret engagements, and the ambition of power, that ought also to be dissolved; whereas, as long as they confine themselves, rendering due obedience to the laws, to free and individual exertions in the investigation of truth, there is no means of putting a stop to it, without at the same time stopping the progress of the human mind.

It is maintaining a very strange opinion, that the Jesuits, who have not been sufficiently powerful to secure themselves against the effects of the
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the interests of despotism. They wished Princes to enjoy an absolute authority under their direction, and endeavoured to deprive them of it if they did not obey them.

hatred which they had excited, would have had the means of preventing the Revolution of France. This Revolution has, in a single instant, overturned all the monastic institutions; and yet it is imagined, that the Jesuits who had not been able to maintain their influence to that epoch, would have stopped the revolutionary torrent, if their Order had not been destroyed! At the time of their suppression, the Jesuits had few distinguished members: the philosophers who are accused of the most dangerous systems, had passed their early youth in their schools. If their religious zeal had not strength sufficient to retard the explosion of philosophical opinions in the middle of the eighteenth century—how could they put an end to them on the eve of the nineteenth?

In order to prove that the Revolution of France was prepared a long time beforehand, different predictions have been quoted as announcing it: but they were applicable to all the States of Europe. Several writers had remarked, that the French tribunals, by opposing such taxes as the Government stood in need of, might oblige them to convoke the States General. Every one knew, during the reign of Louis XIV. that the Parliament possessed this power; but what was not known was, that they

were resolved to make use of it, at the peril even of their own existence.

Of all the predictions which have of late been recalled into notice, the most remarkable is that of Leibnitz, which M. Hender, one of the most distinguished authors of Germany, has copied into one of his works, *Briefe zur Beförderung der Humanität*. That illustrious philosopher said, "that the irreligious and frivolous principles which were gaining ground more and more, threatened Europe with a general revolution." He complained that "there no longer existed any public spirit; that in the world it was no longer honest men who were distinguished, but men of honour, who, merely by abstaining from some actions reckoned base, might sacrifice every thing to their pleasures, to their caprices, who might shed rivers of human blood, and overturn every thing in order to gratify their ambition." He complained, "that the love of one's country, and attachment to the general welfare, were considered as ridiculous prejudices; that no duty to posterity was acknowledged or respected; and that little attention was paid to the dreadful lot prepared for those who were to come after." "If this epidemical disease still makes progress," adds Leibnitz, "Providence will

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their enjoyments, what they owe to their fellow-creatures, the prediction of Leibnitz still threatens them.

Leibnitz has not attributed to philosophy the evils on which he founds his prediction, which is prior to the philosophers of this century*. Egotism and corruption of morals, the necessary consequence of luxury and idleness, and which are the most frequent source of the fall of States, have made further progress since his death. They have contributed, in France, to the exhausting of the public treasury; they have contributed, more especially, to the excesses of the Revolution: but they did not produce the contest for power between the King and the Judges, without which the ancient Government would have withstood as long as many other States of Europe the fatal influence of the prevailing vices. These vices are not the work of the philosophers. Some men on whom this title has been conferred, have, it is true, favoured them by their licentious writings, and by false systems; but a much greater number of philosophical works have, like Leibnitz, lamented the destruction of patriotism, the indifference for the general welfare, false honour, and the immorality of the opulent classes of society. The countries

* Leibnitz died in 1716.

countries of Europe where the morals are most corrupt, are precisely those where philosophical researches are forbidden, where only the agreeable sciences, and whatever flatters and seduces the imagination, are allowed. The poets in every age, and in every country, have encouraged immorality much more than the philosophers*.

They who live in effeminacy and idleness, and occupy themselves exclusively about their pleasures, are not acquainted with the lessons of Epicurus; and the wretches who at Paris and Versailles honoured themselves with the title of *Roués*†, could scarcely read. Several modern philosophers have been justly blamed,

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* What more odious maxim could the most audacious sophist have invented than that of the Abbé Bernis:

*Rions des préceptes sauvages
De nos censeurs rigoureux.
Nous serons toujours assez sages,
Si nous sommes souvent heureux.*

Let us laugh at the savage precepts of our rigorous censors.
We shall always be sufficiently wise, if we can often be happy.

† This name was given to those persons, generally of the highest rank, who were remarkable for all sorts of debauchery, who gloried in their crimes, and in being denominated *Roués*, or persons worthy of being put to the torture or broken on the wheel.

as having destroyed or weakened religious principles. Different passages of their works have been collected, in order to prove that they attacked indiscriminately all religions, and it has been said that they formed a conspiracy to destroy all religious sects. We shall not dispute here about words, though the term conspiracy is generally applied only to plans the means of whose execution being combined in secret, terminate in acts of violence. If the adoption of a system, the efforts and arguments used to give it the ascendancy by a real conviction, were sufficient to form a conspiracy, there would be nothing but conspiracies in all human opinions. Every religious sect would be a conspiracy against all others; and it might be said, that all those whose ideas should be found different from one's own, are real conspirators. Indeed, there would have been, from the beginning of the world, even to our own days, a conspiracy against common sense, of which the numerous agents profess the most fatal zeal.

We mean not to deny, but that many philosophers of this century have combated with violence all religious opinions. These are, however, of the greatest importance to the happiness of States; they give to the rules of morality, a sanction which the best laws cannot supply—

supply—for the laws can only oppose known crimes—they restrain only through fear; they may bind ferocious men, but they can never prevent men from becoming ferocious. In the painful struggle between our passions and the sense of our duty, religious opinions furnish us with the most powerful aid; they enable us to support the greatest hardships, and furnish the only means of consolation in adversity.

It is not sufficient for the public interest that our private reflections should be directed to the Supreme Being, and our duties towards him: public worship also is necessary, in order to disseminate consolatory truths and the precepts of virtue, and in order to recall them continually to the attention of the people. The Creator has placed in the heart of man, a sentiment of justice, which we call conscience, which leads him to perform his duty, and inspires him with remorse when he swerves from it; but conscience does not enable him to discover all his obligations, nor all that is conformable or contrary to the order established by Providence. Such a study requires serious meditations. The multitude cannot be capable of such exertions; and the majority of the great, who dissipate their lives in sensual pleasure, are still less so; their intemperance obscures their understanding.

standing. Thus, in a country wherein the doctrines of religion have not established the most essential principles of morality, the consciences of the great and of the people will be at the mercy of the first sophist who may wish to distinguish himself by new systems, or of the first poet who may flatter their passions.

I know it is possible to possess religious opinions, and yet be abandoned to every sort of vice; but at any rate, the guilty do not set up their crimes as virtues, and the maxims of corruption as precepts. I know too that fatal errors have often been inculcated under the name of religion; that expiations, which do away remorse, have often been established; that the rivalry of different sects has occasioned woeful calamities; that the most evident contradictions have been mingled with the old doctrines; that in some countries, for example, though Christianity teaches humility and the contempt of human grandeur, ecclesiastical dignities have been reserved, not for the most virtuous, but for prejudices of birth; that the patrimony of the poor has been appropriated to maintain the *éclat* of certain families, to enrich chapters and orders of knighthood, in which vows are uttered which the heart abjures, which morality does not authorise, and the supposed observation of which is
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in general only a real scandal. But these inconveniences by no means equal the advantages produced by religious opinions. Here the evil appears by intervals—the good always exists. Can it be fairly denied, that the doctrine of Christianity still more than philosophy has served the cause of liberty;? What philosopher would have been able to obtain attention from a powerful Monarch, if he had dared to tell him that the meanest of his slaves was his brother, perhaps superior to him in virtue, and for that very reason more respectable in the eye of wise; if he had commanded him to serve the poor, to humble himself before them, and to render a solemn homage to natural equality, which, for the maintenance of good order, ought to yield to the authority of magistrates; but which ought not the less be to impressed on our hearts, in order to direct us continually in our duty, in whatever does not concern our public functions?

In order to avoid counteracting such important benefits, we ought always to use circumspection, even in refuting the false opinions which a people may have joined with the belief of a Divinity and of eternal justice: for men who are superstitious easily become impious. The only errors which are not entitled to indulgence,
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are those which may so change the nature of religion, as to render it a source of crimes ; which have occasioned, in former ages, such dreadful ravages ; which consign to perpetual torments in a future life, all the members of a different sect, without regard to their virtues or the purity of their intentions ; and which leads us to treat them on earth as beings odious to the Divinity.

But if we ought to use discretion even in contending against superstition, what are we to think of the attempt of so many writers to destroy our confidence in a Divine Providence—to represent this universe as a world of chance, where the wicked has no futurity to dread—to unbridle all the passions, and render every duty precarious ?

In blaming irreligious writings, I am far from wishing to associate myself with those who proscribe indistinctly as impious all opinions which do not coincide with their own doctrine. When, men, agreeing in the truths most necessary to the maintenance of morality and to the comfort of the unfortunate, explain and defend the dogmas of their own sect, or opinions adopted after a sincere examination—they ought not to be reprobated, if they express themselves with moderation and without insulting the religion of others. How is it possible to suppress one's indignation,

indignation, when, at the end of the 18th century, we see works published, with some sort of success, in which different authors are accused of impiety, because they have disapproved of monastic vows, and of the former pretensions of the Pope; and in which it is affirmed that Necker's treatise on the importance of religious opinions, is a proof of his atheism?

Irreligious writings have greatly increased, during the present century, the love of riches, the thirst for pleasure, the egotism of some, and the jealousy of others. They have favoured the corruption of morals; and amongst a corrupted people, civil broils are more cruel. They have therefore produced fatal effects during the Revolution of France, but they have not been the cause of it: and had there been no other causes of political changes, the ancient Government would still have subsisted. There is no need to have recourse to irreligion, in order to explain the disorder of the finances: for religious opinions, however useful, however respectable they may be, are not always calculated to put a stop to the avidity of courtiers, or to confer ability on ignorant administrators. The members of the Parliaments, whose resistance rendered the States General necessary, were most of them extremely attached to the established religion.

Religious

Religious opinions, considered in general, are not connected with any particular form of government. The principle of obedience to the established authorities, is common to all Christian sects; and yet it has not prevented people who were groaning under the yoke of slavery, from resisting the abuse of power, nor the intrigues of the ambitious from often prevailing over the precepts of obedience.

In the period of the greatest fervour for the Church of Rome, Italy was filled with Republics; and the cities of Switzerland conquered their liberty from the Dukes of Austria and the feudal Nobility. Religious opinions were not weakened, when the States General of 1356 seized upon the sovereign authority, delivered up France to every kind of disorder; and when despair caused the farmers to commit so many excesses:—they were not weakened, when the Parliament of Paris declared war against the royal authority, during the minority of Louis XIV. The inhabitants of America, when they separated themselves from England, had more sentiments of piety than the people of Europe.

Religious opinions have even often produced civil commotions. In order to prevent this, they should be constantly regulated by the decisions of the chief ministers of religion

religion; and, at the same time, these should be always attached to the interest of the magistrates: they would then be the most solid support of government. But this is not the case; and unless Heaven should send us angels in order to govern and instruct us, the establishment of such a despotism over the conscience is by no means to be desired. We cannot enjoy any good on earth, without suffering some inconveniences peculiar to it. Christianity has had the happiest influence on morality, both public and private: but the different explanations of several of its precepts or dogmas, have occasioned many revolutions. The Popes, for several centuries, made it the duty of the people to revolt against such Kings as they did not find sufficiently tractable. The Protestants in many countries where attempts were made to force them to adopt the doctrine of the Romish church, have overturned their ancient government. Some Anabaptists, with the intention of rendering the civil state conformable to the maxims of christian perfection, for a long time committed the greatest cruelties; and when Charles the First mounted the scaffold, the false principles of liberty and equality which prepared his punishment, were the work, not of the
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philosophers, but of the religious fanaticism of the Puritans.

It is therefore drawing a false conclusion from the circumstances of the times, to represent religious opinions as incompatible with revolutions, instead of confining ourselves to demonstrate their influence on morality. It is a conclusion still more fallacious, to wish to attribute exclusively to the Christians of the Romish church, fidelity to established government. It is now attempted to be proved that their principles are favourable to the authority of Kings, and that those of the reformed Christians are more analogous to republican governments. We ought not to decide on this subject from momentary systems, the result of a natural alliance among all those who have undergone a common persecution. But if we examine the doctrine uniformly inculcated in the two religions, we shall have reason to conclude that it is similar in all that concerns the sovereign power, whether it be in the hands of a King, or exercised by several magistrates. There is, however, a difference in this respect, that the Protestants acknowledge in the civil authority a supremacy, or the right of regulating the ecclesiastical discipline, and of superintending religious education;

education; whilst the Roman Catholic clergy wish to be independent of the magistrates, in their doctrine and in their decisions.

With respect to the agreement of the interest of a church with that of a government, the case is the same as with all other interests: if the ministers of religion are favoured by the laws, they are attached to the order established. If there are several sects in a State, and if one be predominant, the partisans of the subordinate sects may be more disposed to wish for political changes: thus the Protestants subject to Roman Catholic magistrates have generally little affection for the authority which governs them. It is the same with the Romanists, in countries wherein Protestants exercise the sovereign authority. But the different sects of Christians, when they are satisfied with the protection which they enjoy, reconcile themselves to all forms of government: thus we see, that the democratic Cantons of Switzerland were Roman Catholics; and that in several countries, wherein the power of the Prince approaches to absolute monarchy, the reformation of Calvin is the religion of the State.

The French Calvinists, and those who were denominated Jansenists, having long suffered persecutions, were necessarily discontented with

the ancient form of government; and their opponents have not failed to accuse them of having destroyed it. But they have had no greater share than the Judges, the Nobles, and the Clergy of France, in the circumstances which rendered changes in the political order necessary; nor did they manifest, in the first periods of the Revolution, greater eagerness to limit the authority of the King. Two Protestants, *Barnave* and *Rabaud de St. Etienne*, are referred to; but it can only be those who had no means of knowing their motives, and observing their conduct, who could suspect that the interest of the reformed sect had the slightest influence on their doctrine and their actions. They had by no means the sectary spirit; they entertained no hatred against the Romish clergy; they wished for toleration, as it became enlightened men to wish for it. They both commenced their political career with systems of moderation, with the intention of following the lessons of experience, of opposing rash innovations, and of proposing nothing in the forms of the government then existing, but the modifications necessary for the security of liberty. We shall soon see what circumstances caused them to swerve from their first purposes, and led them into a wrong road. Besides there is no greater reason
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for attributing to the sect of the reformed, the system of two Protestants, than there would be to attribute to the Church of Rome that of so great a number of ardent revolutionists brought up in that church.

With respect to the Jansenists, many of them distinguished themselves in the beginning of the Revolution by their zeal for true liberty: some have yielded, as so many orthodox Catholics have done, to their passions, which religious opinions are not always able to subdue. The majority exerted themselves in order to prevent the destruction of France; and during the time of popular tyranny, they partook of the misfortunes and dangers of proscription.

It is not true, that there is a necessary connexion between infidelity and the hatred of established governments. Among infidels, as among religious men, some love liberty, others are the partizans of despotism: this depends on their situation, or on the systems which they have adopted. Thomas Hobbes, who considered all rights and all duties as mere conventions, all religious sentiments as the effect of fear, and all our resolutions as the necessary result of our desires—Thomas Hobbes was a zealous partizan of despotism; and the pious Milton was too enthusiastic a friend of liberty: and in the

Revolution of France the *Chartreux* Don Gerle, the prophets La Brouffe, and several other pious but mad enthusiasts, thought that they saw, in the overthrow of the State, the renovation of the primitive church.

Those who have written against the philosophers, have mentioned, amongst the infidels of this century, Frederick II. King of Prussia, the Empress Catherine II. several Princes who are still alive ; many persons who have enjoyed great power, in France, such as the Controller-general *Terrai*, the Chancellor Meaupou, the Keeper of the Seals Lamoignon, the Cardinal de Brienne, &c. I know not whether all the persons accused by those writers merit the reproach of impiety ; but, by quoting such names, they prove that irreligion does not always suppose revolutionary opinions.

It is even evident that atheism is rarely found allied with the love of true liberty, that is, with the love of justice. The cold-hearted man who sees in the universe nothing but a blind assemblage of elements without direction, cannot be always sensible to the misfortunes of his fellow-creatures : in his ideas nothing is certain but his own personal interest. If his doctrine be not the effect of a momentary aberration of his reason, and of the influence of some sophists ; and
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if his heart do not guard him against the consequences of his system, his duties will soon appear to him mere unmeaning words, which imbecility wishes to make use of as a support, which force interprets as it pleases—and men, vile instruments whom genius knows how to render useful, or to destroy, as may be most for its advantage. Thus atheists love despotism, when they possess power; they are ready to favour anarchy, when their ambition is not satisfied. But he who possesses religious sentiments, cannot be consistent in his opinions without detesting tyranny—without believing that men derive from nature rights which should be held sacred under all forms of government, and which authority cannot infringe without violating the primitive conditions of its institution.

Notwithstanding all the declamations of the present day, on the influence of modern philosophers, it may be remarked, that before the Revolution it had diminished in France for many years, both in its useful as well as dangerous effects. Consequently the necessity of respecting domestic ties began to be more clearly discerned: obscene productions were no longer so much sought after; the philosophers themselves mutually confessed the consequences of their

errors: Palissot exhibited them on the theatre; J. J. Rousseau censured their pride, their love of fame, and the boldness of their systems; and he himself was denounced as deserving the same reproach. Madame de Genlis defended the established religion; and the writings of Bernardin de St. Pierre, wherein so many proofs of a Providence are collected together, gained general approbation. But fashion never stops where reason would direct: its influence had restored to favour, among the first classes, many abuses and prejudices. Never were greater efforts made, in order to prove that it was necessary for the good order of society, to have in France a hundred thousand privileged persons, who proud of their descent, real or supposed, from the ancient possessors of fiefs or from ancient warriors, despised the posterity of peaceable men, or of those who were enslaved or oppressed. Never was the rage of genealogies more strong; never were more false certificates of nobility purchased. It was no longer the King who dispensed honours, but all those who had any pretensions to nobility chose whatever titles were most agreeable to them; and self-created counts, marquisses, barons, and chevaliers, were every where to be met with. As if the King had only belonged to this particular class, nobody was presented to him

him but such as could give proofs of nobility from the year 1400. The foldiers were deprived of the advantage of becoming officers, ormerly destined as a reward for their zeal and good conduct: a discipline contrary to their ideas of honour and to the national character was introduced. It was declared that, in order to obtain a lieutenancy, it was necessary to have four generations of nobility. The parliaments required the same conditions of those whom they admitted among their members. New laws had established a difference of punishment for the noble and plebeian, convicted of the same crimes. Almost all the ecclesiastical dignities were reserved for the former. Institutions conceived in the ages of ignorance, and contrary to Christianity, were multiplied in their favour, in order to confer on their children a great portion of the revenues of religion and of the poor. Enlightened persons, who were considered as philosophers, partook of these Quixotic opinions. Guibert, *rapporteur* of the council of war, was for ever repeating that nobles only ought to command foldiers: he conceived this to be a great advantage with respect to obedience, but did not at all consider the injustice and humiliation which is the consequence of such a privilege, and the want of encouragement for honour and bravery.

Other

Other writers, in order to serve the feudal nobility, affected to confound it with the nobility of functions and with that of an illustrious origin, that is, with the importance which public opinion in all countries attaches to the descendants of great men.

Sometimes, indeed, the rigour of the new regulations was mitigated; plebeians obtained military commissions as well as leave to purchase offices in the superior tribunals, or acquired other dignities: but the most general way of proceeding was, to suppose them noble, and to cause false certificates to be given them; and these pretended nobles detached themselves more from the people, and affected greater attachment to the pretensions of that class to which they wished to appear to belong. I will not deny but that the Administration now and then conferred important places on some persons of obscure origin, who had too much pride to blush at their birth, or to wish to abandon the interests of the people: nor will I deny that men of learning, who did not enjoy the privileges of nobility, would no longer endure contempt, and were better acquainted with their rights than in the preceding century; and that many enlightened nobles preferred the public good to their own distinctions. But it is not the less certain that it was
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more uncommon than formerly, to see the French raise themselves by their merit alone; that the nobility was more favoured; and that the desire of belonging to the predominant class had become more general. If those to whom custom had granted the title of noble, had not enjoyed exclusive privileges, it would perhaps have happened that ultimately all men of a certain education would have been considered as such: but the advantages which were reserved for them in the collection of taxes, in the forms of judgment, in the distribution of places—their exemption from the militia service, and other public burdens, aggravated the lot of the people in proportion as the nobility became more numerous, and degraded more and more the quality of simple citizen.

The opinions of a great number of Frenchmen with respect to religion, experienced a retrograde impulse beyond all due bounds. Tired (if we may be allowed the expression) of believing nothing, they were looking for miracles every where. An absurd credulity was observed in the higher classes, and among their imitators:—Mesmer was eclipsed by workers of miracles—Cagliostro exhibited ghosts. The Jansenists re-established what they called
l'œuvre,

*Pauvre** : they renewed in some Parisian cellars *les secours*, and the tests so celebrated in the beginning of this century ; that is, they crucified women, or beat them on the belly with enormous pieces of wood. Within two leagues of Lyons, in the presence of a number of profelytes, the Curé of Farens pierced with nails the hands and feet of his maid servant—another day he pierced her tongue with a penknife †. The wits affected the same disdain for philosophy, which the latter had entertained for superstition. They supposed that they had discovered, by the sublimity of their genius, particular reasons for reciting their rosary, and obtaining indulgencies. In short, a thousand circumstances with which I have been personally acquainted, convince me that if the Revolution had not given any new turn to the direction which the fashion of the day had taken, it would have become very favourable to superstitious ideas. I do not mean to say that this fashion would have subsisted long, nor that it had become general : learning was too much diffused, to be so easily destroyed. Since, however, the influence of philosophical opinions was

* The Jansenists denominated *Pauvre* their secret connexions for propagating their doctrine.

† In 1787, or 1788.

was weakened, at the moment when the Revolution commenced, they could not have given rise to it.

But the charges against the philosophers have not been confined to the fall of the ancient government of France; they are also accused of having, by the influence of their opinions, caused the murder of Gustavus III. King of Sweden, and the loss of the independence of Poland. Among the noble conspirators who prepared the death of Gustavus, I do not know a single one who has been desirous of playing a part in the Revolution of France, though this would have been extremely easy for them; as the French demagogues were then calling to their ranks all the madmen of Europe. But the Swedish conspirators had not the same systems; and their guilty measures were not destined to effect the establishment of a democracy.

With respect to Poland — if philosophical opinions influenced the changes made in 1791, by the two Chambers of the Diet and by the King, it does honour to the philosophers; for these changes were legitimate, declared according to the established forms, and directed by prudence and moderation. They did not effect at once all the good which they wished, be-
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cause they wished to guard as much as possible against misfortunes. No motive can excuse those who compare a revolution brought about without violence, in order to terminate a long anarchy, with a revolution in which both the vicious and the salutary institutions have been destroyed without distinction. If the despair of the Polonese has since led them to adopt fatal measures, who is accountable for it?

Let the fate of Poland be now considered as decided, and let the inhabitants be invited to remain obedient to the governments which have divided their provinces; the interest of humanity requires it: but let no one try to fally the efforts which they have made, in order to establish their independence. We should avoid reviving recollections injurious to their repose. No good—not even political liberty—is worth the sacrifice of the peace and personal safety which is enjoyed under a moderate government, whatever may be the viciousness of its origin. I shall therefore say nothing more on this subject, unless that it is a crime against truth, and against the rights of nations, to wish to counteract the justice of history.

Let us now enquire into the causes which have produced so many misfortunes in the
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course of the Revolution of France. The French had expressed their wish for the States General, in order to put an end to abuses, and to reconcile liberty with monarchical government: nothing therefore was more important than their composition. It was a question, Whether they should take as a model the former States General, which were only extraordinary assemblies, called together at the interval of centuries, without any determined rights, without any established forms? Or, whether they should consider the difference of times, and the great interests on which they were to decide? The Cardinal de Brienne, in hopes of putting off the moment of convocation, by a decree of the King's council, caused all well-informed persons to be invited to employ themselves in enquiries and discussions, respecting the forms of assemblies of the same nature. This imprudent measure excited a spirit of party; and in the contest of the pretensions of all the classes, it conferred on the friends of liberty, as well as on the partizans of abuses, the right of maintaining their different opinions. The Parliaments and a part of the Nobility declared, in the most imperious manner, for the forms observed in the States General of 1614, which had produced nothing but dissensions
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between the Nobles and the Commons, and which those dissensions had rendered totally useless. The friends of liberty solicited forms more favourable to the general interest.

Unfortunately the Revolution overtook the French before their minds had been exercised in political discussions. They loved liberty without being well acquainted with it. Every one represented it differently, according to his situation. Of what utility could be the study of public law, in a country where the King laid claim to absolute authority, and in which the Judges, who bought their offices, wished to share with him the sovereign power? Accordingly this study was in general disdained: few men of letters employed themselves in it; and it was even neglected by almost all the professed lawyers. It is therefore probable, that if the King's Ministers had proposed a proper formation of the legislative assembly, they would have met with great obstacles in the general ignorance and in private interests. It is not to be doubted, for example, if they should have wished to give to the Peers of France that pre-eminence in the legislation which their ancient prerogatives might have procured them—or if the elections, and the places in the Upper House, had been reserved for the eldest branches
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of noble families possessing a considerable revenue in land, but that a great part of the Nobility would have been highly discontented. Instead of an hereditary House, it had been intended to create an Upper House of Senators for life: but for this the Noblesse would have had still less inclination; and the enthusiastic partizans of an equality ill-understood would not have failed to represent this institution to the people as too aristocratical. Nevertheless, the Government ought to have hazarded every thing in order to obtain a national assembly, which, by its nature, might maintain union among the citizens. Unfortunately the Administration did not seem to perceive the consequences of a defective composition:—they resolved to divide the French into several classes; not according to their functions or property, but according to their birth. They did not confine themselves, as formerly, to the assembling the possessors of fiefs; they called together all those who bore the title of noble, to whom they granted the right of choosing representatives. They in like manner granted a particular representation to the commons, under the name of *Tiers-Etat*. Among the clergy, which formed the first order, the interests were divided, according as the ecclesiastics were born noble or plebeian. The deputies were only to

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be the bearers of the resolutions of those who had chosen them.

A very numerous body of noble families, believing themselves possessed of exclusive rights to power, could not feel the same interests as the other citizens; and the body of the people, from which were separated the noble and the ennobled (that is, all those who possessed any considerable property, or who filled any important office), was precisely composed as if it were intended to excite their jealousy and discontent. Their deputies, however, were in general as well chosen as they could be according to the forms which had been prescribed.

There were, therefore, numberless circumstances calculated to recall to the minds of the former, the prejudices of the times of chivalry—so famous in romance—so unfortunate in history; and to dispose the latter to confound, in their hatred of the distinctions of the feudal Nobility, the respect due to families rendered illustrious by their services, and the institutions necessary for the support of the Monarchy.

Nothing is better calculated to afford an exact idea of the inconveniences of this form of representation than the following anecdote, which will
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in particular render them obvious to the English, who are too apt to confound the Nobility of France with that of England, although they are not of the same nature. While the inhabitants of Dauphiny were exerting themselves in order to obtain the States General, in hopes of attaining political liberty, an officer of cavalry, distinguished by his learning and the liberality of his sentiments, displayed among his friends the most ardent zeal for the welfare of France ; but he never appeared at any of the assemblies. They pressed him to go, and represented it to him as a duty : at length he acknowledged that he was not a noble, and that yet he passed for such in the world ; that he had neither the dishonesty to counterfeit titles like so many others, nor the fortitude to undeceive those who had hitherto considered him as their equal ; and that, not knowing in what rank to place himself, he could only assist with his prayers those who wished to render his country happy and free. I do not say that we ought to approve this weakness of pride ; but in fact, they who were acquainted with ancient France, cannot be surprised at it. It is well known that the greatest part of those who attained the enjoyment of a certain degree of respectability, would no longer belong to the order of the people ; that a great

number of persons still blush at it, and that the pretenders to nobility have prodigiously increased since the Revolution.

This same Nobility, which was so easily obtained by offices or false titles, had lost its former means of influence on the minds of the multitude. There were still in this class many very respectable men; but there were also many who were poor and without education, whose pretensions to form a superior class nothing could justify, and on whom, in a good system of representative government, not even the right of voting in the election of the deputies of the commons would have been conferred.

Among the French who sincerely wished for liberty, they who had most studied its principles, learning that the King's Ministers were disposed to form an assembly of representatives of the three Orders, resolved to have a better mode of composition for the future, established by this assembly itself; and to make the Orders deliberate together, in order that their jealousy might create no obstacle to the establishment of a Constitution. They conceived, that if the Orders were separated, they would become enemies from the first. It was known that the Deputies of the Nobility did not pretend in 1789, as they had pretended in 1614, that the plebeians were the subjects to
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the Nobles, that they could not call them their elder brethren without being wanting in respect, that they ought to be prevented from wearing the same dress, that they ought to be forced to cut the hams of their dogs, and that marriage between individuals of the two Orders ought to be prohibited. But it was also known that the greatest part of the Nobles of 1789 would demand the right of forming for ever a political body, the exclusive privilege of purchasing fiefs, of bearing arms, and obtaining certain decorations. It was known that the Clergy would oppose religious toleration, the liberty of the press, and the reform of a great number of abuses. It was thought that the union of the Orders would prevent these inconveniences, that the just remonstrances of the Commons would be supported by the most enlightened of the Nobles and the Clergy; that violent principles would be combated by the moderate men of the three different classes, and that thus the majority would be always in favour of prudence and justice. In order to prevent the interests of the people from being too much subject to those of privileged persons, it was required that the Deputies of the Commons, or the *Tiers-Etat*, should be equal in number to the Deputies of the Clergy and Nobility together, or double one of these Orders. This system,

which the enthusiastic partizans of democracy considered as too favourable to the authority of the King, soon became the general and irresistible wish of nine tenths of the French Nation. It was adopted by a part of the Nobility, and by many very pious ecclesiastics, who were much attached to the royal authority. It will not supposed, for instance, that the Archbishop of Vienne, who, in the States General, conducted the majority of the Clergy to the Assembly of the United Orders, was misled by the opinions of modern philosophers—he whose religious zeal had appeared on many occasions too exalted. It has been said that he was forced; but no kind of constraint had directed the votes in the Assemblies of Dauphiny. He had there taken the free and solemn engagement, with the greatest part of the Nobility and Clergy of that province, to contribute, by any means, to a union of the Orders, and a *double representation of the Commons*.

Will it be said that the subject had no right to fix the forms of the National Assembly? There cannot be a greater crime than that of disturbing the tranquillity of one's country, under the pretext of ameliorating the condition of the people: but when the Government itself has destroyed its own authority—when in its weakness it refers to its subjects the care of saving the

the commonwealth—it is not only a right, but a duty of all citizens to contribute to that object, every one according to his knowledge. The exercise of this right is doubtless dangerous, and may (as France has just proved) have the most terrible consequences ; but how can it be reasonably contested? Who will dare to pretend, when an Administration has, by its own fault, destroyed its resources, and can no longer command obedience, that the citizens, whom it invites to deliberate on the interests of the State, are obliged to restore its former power, and the means of again abusing it? Is it surprising that a people, whose chiefs suffered the reins of government to fall from their hands, should seek security for their rights in a Constitution? Is not such an enterprise noble and generous, as long as they who direct it have the resolution to be just and moderate, and that they do not entertain the criminal hopes of establishing the general happiness on the misfortunes of individuals?

Now it was thus, whatever may be said at present, that the Revolution of France commenced in 1788. In the beginning of 1784 the classing of the pretensions of the different Orders, some inflammatory writings, and some acts of violence, threw some clouds over the

beautiful prospect which was opening to every eye : but the great majority of those who then enjoyed any influence, had pure intentions. They wished for liberty founded on good laws ; they wished to prevent tumult, and not to do away all restraint on covetousness.

It is continually repeated that, if the Orders had remained separate, the royal authority and public tranquillity would have been maintained. Several preceding States General have been referred to, without reflecting on the extreme difference of circumstances. It is not considered that those Assemblies had few means of dictating laws to the Monarch, since he possessed independent revenues, and since he could do without their grants. At that time the greatest part of the Commons were subject to the Noblesse ; they were obliged, in order to obtain any protection, to devote themselves to the interests of the Throne. It was easy, in 1614, to dismiss the Deputies of the three Orders, the moment there was reason to dread the consequences of their quarrels ; and from that time they were never assembled till 1789 : but at this last period the situation of the finances giving to the States General more authority than they have ever exercised, and the progress of science and industry affording to the Commons the
means

means of rivalling the Nobility; by not granting them a double representation, and by making them deliberate separately, the same misfortunes would have occurred from which the union of the Orders has not been able to secure France, and from which perhaps it might have secured it, had it not been for other causes, which I shall not delay to point out.

Let us suppose, contrary to all probability, that the separate Orders had acted in concert, and that public tranquillity had not been disturbed by their respective pretensions, they would have sanctioned this monstrous composition of the States General: they would have decided that all Frenchmen, above twenty-five years of age, should be periodically called together, in order to deliberate separately, the one part as nobles, and the other as plebeians, respecting all the concerns of the State, not only in every town, but even in the smallest village; in order to form, in writing, their demands and their plans; and to confide them to deputies subject, in the assembly of representatives, to the orders of those who should have chosen them.—Thus a violent aristocracy, and a tumultuous democracy, would have been established, of which the inevitable contest would not have failed

failed to produce anarchy and a general dissolution.*

M. Necker is not, as is generally believed, the author of the system of the *double* representation of the *Tiers-Etat* and of the union of the Orders. He did nothing but propose (as one of the King's Brothers had done) to grant to the Commons the number of Deputies which they

* *Note of the Author.*—Never was a country governed by so absurd a Constitution: such a political Assembly cannot be compared with the Parliament of England. The House of Commons has the care of the interest of all families without distinction of birth. The members are proprietors, elected by proprietors; they are not subject to the will of the electors. The hereditary Nobles, who sit in the Upper House, are not the representatives of a particular cast: but they have a personal magistracy, which is transmitted only to one of their children. The others are not separated from the class of the people, and unite the interest of the Peerage with that of the most obscure individual. In other States, it is true, there are Legislative Assemblies, in which the body of the Nobles is formed of Vassals, whose families are entirely separated from the People: but the Commons are therein represented only by the envoys of some Councils of towns and boroughs. These Assemblies have generally a very circumscribed influence, although they are sometimes dangerous to the authority of the Prince. Their composition renders them little advantageous to general liberty; but, at any rate, they do not produce dissensions among the different classes of the citizens.

they desired, and that because he was acquainted with the wishes energetically expressed in every part of France; because it was necessary either to yield to those wishes, or to give up the States General; to become bankrupt; to brave the resentment of all classes of the people.

The King's Ministers did not calculate the consequences of the *double* representation; they did not foresee that it would bring about the forced coalition of the Clergy and Nobility. They took no measures in order to direct the votes of the electors, to agree beforehand with the most enlightened deputies, to keep out or to gain over such as were dangerous.* If they did not think they had sufficient influence to cause a House of Peers to be established by the King, by augmenting their number, or Senators for life, and a House of Commons formed from among
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* *Note of the Author.*—At this period the King's Ministers, little accustomed to the precautions necessary in times of trouble, were absurdly delicate in calming the fury of some factious persons, base enough to be capable of rebelling themselves.—It is indeed cowardice to pay such men, when there are other means of resisting them: but when it is dangerous to resist them, it is justifiable to compound with them as with robbers. The Ministers changed their opinion, when the evil was beyond remedy, and were then equally prodigal to those wretches as they had been formerly obstinate in their refusal.

the proprietors without distinction of birth, they ought at least to have decided that the Orders should be united, in order to deliberate on a plan of fundamental laws, which might regulate the rights and the future composition of the Legislative Body. But they allowed all the Deputies to arrive at Versailles, and opened the States-General, before the forms of their deliberation had been determined upon; though they were informed that the one party had solemnly engaged to count the votes by number, and the other by order; they did not even seem to suspect the volcanoes which were burning around them. When they evidently laid the different Orders under the necessity of attacking and combating one another, they seemed to believe that all would end peaceably. The day of the opening of the States-General, the keeper of the seals, M. de Barentin, applauding the double representation of the Commons, as the result of a cry almost universal, testified the desire of seeing the Orders consent to a union; and yet invited them to begin by deliberating separately. M. Necker expressed the same wish, and entertained only some uneasiness with respect to their first deliberation, as if it had been unknown that they had sworn to their constituents

stituents, the one part to insist on the union, and the other never to consent to it.

The too great number of deputies, the too great publicity of the discussions, were not the fault of the King's Ministers in particular. It would be absurd to accuse them at present of errors in which we ourselves have had a share; and with respect to those of their errors which may even be reckoned personal, it would be unjust to consider them as criminal. It is a deplorable blindness in the multitude of pretended sages, who have all taken a part more or less in the Revolution, and who at present take advantage of the obscurity of their former situation, to announce that they had calculated and foreseen every thing, in order to assume to themselves the right of declaring all those guilty whose conduct has been more generally noticed, and who have not, like them, taken the interests of a privileged class as their only guide. What man in the midst of the political troubles of France, and of the numberless difficulties which every day presented themselves, could have flattered himself he was infallible? What is the height of injustice is, that M. Necker is spoken of as if he alone had formed the King's Council; and his colleagues, who adopted and seconded his measures, are forgotten. It is
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because it is sufficient for an irritated multitude to meet with an object of vengeance ; and because such a multitude feels too much the necessity of condemning, to be able to decide with discernment.

I do not mean entirely to exculpate M. Necker ; but I desire that the difficulty of his situation be not forgotten. I acknowledge that it has always appeared to me surprising, that in yielding to the wishes of the people, with respect to the double representation of the Commons, he did not consider the union of the Orders as a necessary consequence ; that he did not cause it to be insisted on by the Monarch, in order that it might be peaceably effected, and in order to confer on the King a right to the public gratitude—in short, that he did not perceive that the most dangerous part for the Crown was to remain neutral in the quarrel of the Orders, and to be liable to receive the law from the conqueror.

I am convinced that M. Necker was inclined, at the bottom of his heart, to place the Monarch at the head of the popular party ; which would have been the only means of safety both for the Prince and for the proprietors of every class ; which would have insured to the friends of liberty the means of obtaining

obtaining it, and would have rallied them all in favour of the royal authority, against the partizans of anarchy. But M. Necker probably saw in it too many obstacles, notwithstanding the King's goodness of heart, who was deceived by false reports, and who was too indecisive in his resolutions. He then abandoned the National Assembly to the shocks of its contending elements. He had too much confidence in his own talents, in his credit, and in his popularity—an ephemeral advantage which he hoped to maintain, and which he considered as a certain means of calming every storm. When the troubles increased, he knew no other means but that of appealing to the conscience of the demagogues, in whom he vainly endeavoured to excite remorse: he always advised yielding to them in the moment of danger. It is doubtless necessary to sacrifice a great deal in order to avoid a civil war; but the great foundation of public security ought never to be allowed to be destroyed without resistance: for the anarchy or the tyranny of several brigands is ever the greatest of all misfortunes. M. Necker, since his retirement from public affairs, has too much dissembled the intrigues and menaces which influenced his conduct. He has chosen rather to justify several of his measures,

fures, as if he had voluntarily determined on them, than acknowledge that he had adopted them with reluctance, and in hopes of calming the fury of the factions.

I therefore believe that M. Necker, from his knowledge, his zeal for humanity, his spirit of order and of economy, was an excellent administrator in times of tranquillity ; but that he wanted the qualities necessary for resisting factions—for forming and directing a great party—for determining on a plan, and following it at all hazards—and for opposing violence to violence.

Such then is the lot of statesmen in times of calamity : they are liable to the reproaches of every party. There are many who accuse M. Necker of having, from the beginning of the Revolution, too much favoured the systems of liberty, and for his not having declared himself, from the first moment, against the representation and deliberation by Orders, which could only lead anarchy or to despotism.

The want of plan, of which the whole Council of Louis XVI. might be accused, is one of the principal causes of the misfortunes of France, and that of which the least is said. It was by a variety of contradictory measures that the royal authority was lost. It was by
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flattering the hopes of every party, by favouring and abandoning them by turns, that the administration rendered vain all the efforts of those who wished to serve them, and that they encouraged those who wished their ruin. Every government which, during political troubles, shall not act with energy and dispatch, and shall not have the art either of reconciling the different parties, or of uniting with one of them in order to conquer or perish, must inevitably fall.

Notwithstanding the number of systems produced by the convocation of the States-General, it would not have been impossible to bring about a union among the friends of liberty; and, by their influence, to re-establish harmony among the citizens; or to form a party sufficiently powerful to disconcert the efforts of those who wished for a violent Revolution. A momentary reform of the principal abuses would not have been sufficient: almost all the citizens were desirous of a security for their liberty; resistance to this general wish was absolutely useless. It was therefore necessary to concert with the persons who enjoyed some influence, in order to discover the means of satisfying the nation, without compromising the public tranquillity.

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There were doubtless some very dangerous men in the National Assembly. Some enthusiasts carried their ideas of liberty even to delirium, and considered as the enemies of the country all those who did not agree with their opinions. Some vile intriguers exerted themselves to excite the ambition of the Duke of Orleans, in order to seize upon the sovereign authority in his name; and entered into a league with those who, from whatever motive, wished for a general dissolution. But in the beginning all those voluntary and involuntary agents of anarchy did not amount to the number of 80 in an assembly of 8 or 900 persons. They knew how to take advantage of the imprudence of a small number of hot-headed chevaliers, who entirely mistook the age, and who, by their menaces and haughty maxims, increased the number and fury of their enemies. But by invoking the interest of the proprietors of every class—by a reconciliation with all the moderate Deputies of the Commons—by making use of the zeal which the circumstances had excited among the Ecclesiastics and the Nobles—there would have been a very great majority against the factions by the union of the Orders. Perhaps even the Monarch would have done enough

enough for his interests, if he had protected the *coalition* which the apprehension of tumults began to produce among the most distinguished Deputies.

Many men whom we have since seen declare for violent measures, would then have confined themselves to changes compatible with the general tranquillity. The restless ambition of Mirabeau, his excessive desire of increasing his own celebrity, and of acquiring riches and power, disposed him to serve all parties. I have myself seen him go from the nocturnal committees, held by the friends of the Duke of Orleans, to those of the enthusiastic republicans, and from their secret conferences to the cabinets of the King's Ministers: but if in the first months the Ministers had agreed to treat with him, he would have preferred supporting the royal authority, to joining with men whom he despised. We must not judge of his principles by the numerous contradictions of his harangues and of his writings; in which he said less what he thought, than what might be agreeable to his interest in such or such a circumstance. He has often communicated to me his real opinions; and I have never known a man of a more enlightened understanding, of a political doctrine more judicious, of a more venal character, and

of a more corrupt heart. He afterwards sold himself to the Court several times; but they did not buy him over till he had no other power left but that of doing harm. When he had once publicly associated himself with the perturbators and flatterers of the multitude, he could no longer speak rationally without being accused by them of treachery.

Barnave, when in Dauphiny, entertained the same opinion as myself, and published works in which he maintained the doctrine on which we had agreed in our conversations. If the royal authority had been willing to come to an understanding with the friends of liberty, it would have been easy to oppose him to the factious: but when the Administration declared for the privileged Orders, against those who demanded the establishment of two Houses, he could not resolve to remain in a just and moderate party, which would thenceforth be without influence, because it was equally odious to the enemies of liberty and to the favourites of the multitude. He was led away by persons who, in order to obtain the direction of the Assembly, allowed themselves the use of Machiavelian means. He so far forgot himself as to utter a horrid expression with respect to the murder of Foulon: he repented of
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it from that very moment*. He sent me, in my retreat, an account of his remorse; exerted himself to repair his errors, and to put a stop to the progress of popular tyranny. He was the victim of his repentance; and conducted himself in his last moments, as his former friends might have foreseen: for they had remarked in the character of this interesting and unfortunate young man, beside the pride which had misled, and the talents which distinguished him, noble and generous sentiments, and the highest degree of personal courage.

Rabaud de St. Etienne was also, for some months, in the moderate party; but when the royal authority was overpowered, in the contest in which it had engaged, he was accused, as well as M. Malouet and myself, of having been present at secret assemblies in Madame de Polignac's, of which we were entirely ignorant. He was afraid of the consequences of this calumny, and went over to the party which was then predominant.

Thouret, in the beginning of the Revolution, delivered discourses in favour of liberty and of justice, in a style of such simplicity and perspicuity, and with such strength of reasoning as

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* He afterwards acknowledged all his faults.

reduced his adversaries to reply to him with cries of fury.

The unfortunate Bailli, whose name would never have been mentioned but with respect, if circumstances had not drawn him into a career little adapted to the nature of his studies, to his good, simple, and timid character—the unfortunate Bailli, who never wished to injure a human being, and who had no other fault but that of not having declined the favour of the people of the capital, when it was offered him without his having sought after it, and of not having resisted with sufficient courage the orders of the factions, came to the National Assembly with a plan of a Constitution: he read it in a committee, of which I was a member. This plan did not contain a single idea of political liberty: it left in the King's hands all the sovereign authority, and was only a simple promise of the reform of some abuses. Judge then if this man, who united with great talents the purest intentions, and who atoned for his weakness by the most heroic death, ought to be considered as a conspirator.

Even Barrere, in 1789, entertained sentiments opposite to those which he has since manifested, when, by a cowardly timidity, he became the accomplice and the apologist of the crimes of the

the demagogues. In a periodical work, of which he was the author, he exhibited very moderate principles, and endeavoured rather to calm the minds, than to foment the hatred of the people.

The greatest part of those who prepared the vicious Constitution of 1791, were disposed, before the taking of the Bastille, to sign a general pacification. They would have made sacrifices in order to avoid contending with the royal authority, which had still the military force at its disposal. It was as easy to see that the Deputies of the Noblesse were, in general, ready to desist from their pretensions, when they did not rely on the support of the Monarch. Besides, we must not imagine that there were no other friends of liberty in the National Assembly, but those who have made themselves known as such, by publishing their opinions. How many men have I seen among the Commons as simple and modest as they were enlightened and judicious, who, without hesitation, would have abandoned the most seducing theories in favour of a system compatible with the maintenance of public tranquillity. How many respectable Prelates, excellent Curés, and Deputies of the Noblesse, have I known, who, deceived at first by their habitual opinions, had

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ultimately

ultimately adopted principles which were calculated to satisfy all those who wished for the good of their country !

Among the most ardent Revolutionists who were not members of the National Assembly, there were also many who were distinguished, in the beginning of the troubles, for very moderate opinions. Roland de la Platriere, before he became so zealous a republican, had admired the government of the Pope (*see his Journey in Italy*). Chamfort wrote the 13th of December, 1788, " That a great Nation might elevate and behold above her, three or four hundred distinguished families; that she might render this homage to ancient services, to ancient names, to remembrances: but that she could not support the privileges of so great a number of ennobled individuals."

If I were to proceed in referring to known names, I should have to give a long list of those who, in the National Assembly or out of that Assembly, have successively proceeded from moderation to systems of anarchy and of violence, through fear, through weakness, through ambition, or from resentment against the Court; whose uncertain and contradictory measures alarmed all those who wished for liberty. But I have no intention to injure any one, especially those

those who, whatever may have been the motives of the changes in their principles, wish at present to contribute, by every means in their power, to diminish the calamities of France. The list would be still longer, were I to name all those cowards who, after having flattered all those in power, joined the reigning party of the Revolution, and carried along with them the contagion of the baseness of their character. Finally, the list would be long, were I to name those who, after having shewn a passionate love of liberty, have declared themselves the partizans of absolute Monarchy.

These observations seem to justify what I have already said, that the royal authority might have treated with the honest men of all parties, might have united them under its auspices, and prevented the misfortunes which France has suffered. But, instead of adopting the measures calculated to attach the people to its interests, the Court repented of what it had granted them. It was thought to be necessary to restrain their representatives, by appearances of disdain. The Court was irritated, because they took the title of *Commons*, although this name had always been applied to the Third Estate in the preceding Assemblies. The offer of *making an alliance with the Throne against the pretensions*

pretensions of the Aristocracy was received with contempt.*

¶ During the quarrels of the Orders, M. Neckar, yielding at length to the importunities of a great number of Deputies, resolved to put an end to their differences by a decision of the King. He neglected to concert the execution of it with the representatives who had the greatest influence. I believe his plan had great defects; but however he proposed to cause the Orders to deliberate in conjunction on the future organization of the States-General. This part of his plan was adopted by the Council of Louis XVI. Afterwards the King suddenly changed it, in consequence of the influence of those who wished to maintain the division of the Orders in the way they had been formed by the letters of convocation. They caused it to be declared, *that the separation and independence of the three Orders formed the true Constitution of the State.* For the purpose of preparing the promulgation of the King's will, the Deputies of the Commons were driven from their place of meeting, and every thing was conducted as if it had been intended to dissolve their Assembly. They

* *Note of the Author.*—These expressions were made use of in an address presented to the King by the Commons, to which no answer was returned.

They re-assembled in the hall of the *Jeu de Paume*. In order to prevent the violent measures proposed by the enthusiasts, and in order at the same time to render liberty secure, the most moderate were eager to take the oath not to separate before the establishment of a Constitution. They followed the example which had been set them the year before by several Parliaments or superior Tribunals, which had declared that they would not obey the King's orders, and maintained that they had the right to deliberate wherever their members could meet. One person only refused to take the oath, because he saw around him too many causes of disorder, and because he preferred obedience to the misfortunes with which he saw France threatened. I have, in a former work, rendered homage to his motives and his courage; and I have remembered, with a sentiment of regret, the oath which we took on the 20th of June, 1784: but it is in the midst of the most dreadful commotions, it is from indignation at the triumph of vice, it is from reflecting on the bad use which mad or sanguinary men have made of our efforts for liberty, that I have felt and expressed this regret. The oath of the 20th of June was certainly very dangerous to the authority of Louis XVI; but since the errors of the Administration

nistration had rendered general the wish for political liberty, the Court threatened to tear from the people even the hope of it, after they had seconded their wishes. It was natural for those Deputies who were most anxious to become free, to be upon their guard against its plans; as it is natural, after having been witnesses of the cruelties of the demagogues, that they should now think with a sentiment of regret on such of their measures as unjust men have taken advantage of. In order to be liable to the imputation of guilt, we should have had it in our power to read in futurity all the circumstances which were to bring the French nation under the yoke of popular tyranny.

Precisely the contrary therefore was done to what was demanded by those who wished for public liberty. They were irritated—they were provoked to resistance. A great pretext was afforded to those who wished for tumult. The King gave orders to the Commons—he was not obeyed. It was resolved to force them to separate:—but the desire of liberty was so general, and the public opinion so favourable to the Deputies, that the Government sought in vain for men disposed to disperse them by force of arms.

The union of the Orders was afterwards accomplished in spite of the King, who was obliged to

to command the Noblesse to deliberate with the Commons, in order to satisfy the people. Although the different classes of citizens had been suffered to become mutually exasperated, and though their distrust and hatred had been so imprudently excited, this union produced a joy and reconciliation almost universal—and the men most distinguished for their abilities, and who enjoyed the most general confidence, whether in the National Assembly, in Paris, or in the provinces, announced more than ever moderate views, and the desire of preserving the Monarchical Government, by placing obstacles to the abuse of power. But the advocates for the separation of the Orders caused the King to adopt the resolution of assembling troops, of frightening the people of Paris by great military preparations, of dismissing his Ministers, and appointing in their room men less disposed to agree with the friends of liberty, and of preventing the Orders from deliberating together on the Constitution of the State. The execution of this plan was begun; but the Parisians revolted, and took the Bastille. A great part of the royal army declared for the people, and the King again submitted. The multitude took up arms in every part of France. Intoxicated with the idea of their strength, they lost all notion
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of order and submission ; they became the blind instruments of ambition and fanaticism. In a short time, the majority of the National Assembly, governed by a minority of factious, of enthusiastic, and of pusillanimous persons, who united with those whom they dreaded the most, was obliged to listen to the apology of every crime. Repentment on account of the outrages and injustice every day committed against the Nobles and the Clergy, fortified in their minds the love of distinctions and of privileges, exalted the passions of a great number so far as to blind them with respect to their own interests—so far as even to induce them on several occasions to unite their votes with those of the partizans of anarchy. It is thus that an ecclesiastical Deputy, one of the most distinguished chiefs of the party which wished to maintain the separation of the Orders, exhorted me to renounce the establishment of two Houses, “because,” said he, “if this plan were approved, *the Constitution would last.*”

This concurrence of powerful interests, the clashing of so many different pretensions and fallacious systems, produced measures so dreadful, plots so dangerous, that for those who had an insight, as I had, into the secret views of several committees, it was impossible not to perceive
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all the previous signs of a most dreadful storm. Crimes soon surrounded the Assembly. They took advantage, in a cowardly manner, of the state of weakness to which the Monarch found himself reduced. They forgot his good offices, his zeal for the good of the people; and when he was ready to subscribe to a Constitution favourable to liberty, they dictated laws to him which delivered France over to anarchy.

They who were ignorant of the great revolutionary project brought forward after the taking of the Bastille, might suppose that the crimes would cease after the first effervescence, and that the principal interest of France was still that of liberty: but they who knew the situation of the State, must have conceived that their most important duty then was to prevent the dissolution of the social body, and, if it were possible, to oppose a check to the destructive fury of certain madmen.*

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* *Note of the Author.*—I shall take advantage of this circumstance, in order to say that they who have condemned my retreat from the National Assembly after the 6th of October, 1789, have been ignorant of the motives for it. It has been thought that I was entirely occupied with my personal views, and that terror had caused me to quit at the same time my post and my country. I should blush, had I been capable of sacrificing my duty to the care of my personal safety. On leaving Versailles, I went into my province

The citizens having taken arms, and being confederated without the authority of the civil and military magistrates, all the ties of subordination were dissolved. The direction of the concerns of the State were at the mercy of all the factious individuals who had the means of managing the multitude, and the Assembly itself was the sport of their caprices.

In order to create the most monstrous institutions, it had been conceived sufficient, even among the most enlightened people, that a
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province, with the intention of instructing my constituents, and employing my influence to put a stop to the plans of destruction with which I was acquainted. I had ascertained that my presence was useless in an assembly where fear generally determined the majority of votes. Since it had become an instrument of imprudent or fanatical men, it became necessary to think of means of constraining it. In taking the oath of the 20th of June, I understood that I was contracting an engagement to oppose those who should wish to prevent the establishment of a Constitution; not to subject myself to those who, in order to have it in their power to make it as they pleased, took upon them to overawe opinions by menaces or by violence. I undertook therefore to resist them—but this resistance being ineffectual, I resolved to live in peace. After eight months stay at Grenoble, persecution forced me to retire into Switzerland; and no one can entertain a doubt, but that if I could have remained in France, I should have been obliged either to devote myself on the scaffold, or to applaud like a vile slave all the crimes of the tyrants.

numerous assembly, employed to form a new mode of legislation, should abandon itself without reserve to innovation, and that there should exist no independent force capable of restraining it within proper limits.

The separation of the legislative, executive, and judicial powers; the concurrence and the balance of several authorities, in order to slacken the decisions, and to cause them to be preceded by a long examination, for the purpose of ensuring the pre-eminence of the general over private interest—all this obscure and complicated theory of free Governments, can only be known by a deep study of the history of different States, and by a comparison of their laws and of the effects which they have produced. It cannot be known by a nation in general till after a long experience; so that if some men, enlightened in legislation, and meriting by their probity the respect and the confidence of the greatest number of citizens, do not direct in political changes all the new laws, a people desirous of liberty learns only to its cost the means which obtain and which preserve it.

Several preceding political revolutions have not been so calamitous as that of France, because the general confidence had more quickly united with respect to men capable of re-estab-
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blishing order, and of causing the laws to be respected : but in France, where so many men were rivals in talents and in learning, where so many men, though very learned in different sciences, did not perceive the difficulty of making a good Constitution, and conceived themselves to be all excellent legislators—the old Government being completely destroyed by a succession of bad measures, the formation of a multitude of parties who would by turns attempt to wrest the power from one another, was to be expected, until the extremity of public misfortunes should render dear to the nation the first authority that should be able to ensure personal security.

It is not so much the false doctrines which have produced in France so many crimes, as the ambition of those who wished to seize upon the government. It is in professing the same principles that they have attacked one another with fury. It is in the name of the sovereignty of the people, of liberty and equality, that the different factions have contended with each other, and that they have punished those who obeyed their rivals. The Anglo-Americans had published in their revolution the maxims which have been proclaimed in the Revolution of France—the maxims of the sovereignty of the

the people, which may be so easily interpreted in favour of anarchy—that no authority is legitimate, if the people have not expressly delegated it, which leads to the destruction of all established Governments, and supposes the right of overturning the State in every generation: in short, they had published several other assertions equally dangerous, and yet they have established Constitutions suited to maintain good order and liberty: they readily submitted to their magistrates, and did not become the victims of the factions, because they had religious opinions, purer morals, less ambition, and especially greater confidence in chiefs worthy of their esteem.

Let those who may still wish in different States of Europe for sudden and violent changes in their institutions, well consider, that in the midst of luxury, corruption and egotism, nothing can preserve them from the evils which France has suffered. They will be unable to check the culpable efforts of a multitude of avaricious persons, who place all their ideas of happiness in opulence and authority, who would push forward in crowds, in order to attain to power; and who, in their bloody conflict, would destroy without remorse whatever they might find in their way. Let them expect

therefore, from the progress of knowledge, the reform of abuses; and let them content themselves with soliciting, from the depositaries of the sovereign power, the laws necessary for the maintenance of civil liberty.

We do not intend here to describe the characters of the different factions whose rise and fall have caused streams of human blood to flow in France, and which have oppressed the majority of the representative assemblies as well as the great mass of the people—we speak of them only with a reference to the causes which produced them. Since power had fallen into the hands of the flatterers of the multitude, it was natural that the most democratic opinions should be most applauded. The principles of some writers of this century, but especially of those of the Long Parliament of England, acquired a fatal importance. It was not the influence of those principles which produced the Revolution; it was, on the contrary, the Revolution which produced their influence; and even had they not before been published, the circumstances in which France was, would not the less have created and propagated systems of destruction. They who have an interest in seducing them, know how to invent pretexts best suited to promote their views, and the most analogous
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to the situation of the public mind. Sometimes the people are led to massacre one another for the choice of a master, sometimes for theological quarrels, and sometimes for false notions of liberty and equality.

Thus, though several philosophers have instilled errors analogous to the systems which the predominant parties, in the course of the Revolution of France, have declared that they took as their guide, those philosophers are not to be considered as the real authors of the doctrine which has been preferred, and still less of the means which have been employed. The *Social Contract* of J. J. Rousseau is, of all political treatises, that which has been the most frequently quoted, and with the highest eulogiums; but are we therefore to believe that had this work never existed, they would not have known in France how to maintain (in order to be able to change every thing at pleasure, as had been maintained in England by the Puritan party), that the nation being the only legitimate sovereign, ought itself to regulate its own interests? J. J. Rousseau was to blame in maintaining that the legislative power ought always to be exclusively exercised by the people, which would constitute a despotic or absolute democracy; but it is contrary to his declared intention that some men

have attempted to apply to a great Empire what he supposed adapted to a very small State, wherein the citizens might be united in a general assembly. He was to blame in considering as slaves all those who submit to the decisions of their representatives—it is not however his fault if it has been determined to apply to a representative assembly what he has said of the people themselves. He has warned his readers that he considered it as impossible, in the present state of society, to put his system into execution. He has not been understood; and the ignorant, the fanatics, and the ill-disposed, have made extracts, and published commentaries, as best suited their inclinations. Was it the fault of Montesquieu, if, in reading in his works the eulogium of liberty, his readers did not remark the conditions which he esteemed necessary to its existence? No labour has been bestowed in studying the opinions of political writers, nor care employed to distinguish in them truth from falsehood; but they have only been consulted in order to discover arguments in favour of the theory which it was determined to defend.

We have seen among the partizans of absolute Monarchy, persons formerly known for their attachment to the opinions of the most celebrated philosophers of the age, as we have
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found in the number of the most factious, persons who, till that time, had appeared zealous for the established religion, and submissive to the authority of the Monarch. But it may be said in general of those who have distinguished themselves by a love of liberty, feigned or sincere, that their errors or their crimes have been, as might be expected, in the inverse ratio of their knowledge. What sort of philosophers were Robespierre, Pétion, and some other fanatics, who, from the first days of the National Assembly, incited the people to every excess, and stood forward the defenders of robbery and of murder? What sort of philosophers were those tyrants, united in a committee, and delivering over every day to their executioners, a great number of innocent victims, destroying all means of education, sending indiscriminately to the scaffold old men, women, and children, sparing neither talents nor learning, youth nor beauty? Will it be said, that in their fierce delirium they exaggerated certain errors of some modern philosophers? Yes—as the authors of the massacre of St. Bartholomew exaggerated the errors of some theologians. But what ought we to conclude from hence, unless that the most dreadful calamity which can befall a people in a political revolution, is

to see power usurped by wretches without experience, and void of any principles of morality or religion—who appropriate to themselves in the different systems, as venomous reptiles in the juice of vegetables, whatever can be turned into poison?

In order to enjoy the satisfaction of accusing the philosophers, men often affect to consider as such all those who wish to appear in that character; all those who exert themselves in order to excite attention by absurd opinions; all those who speak with contempt of what virtuous men esteem, and who admire more the energy of the wicked than they detest their crimes. But are a few bad romances, a few verses, and a few pages of journals, sufficient to entitle their authors to be numbered among the men who distinguish themselves in the investigation of truth? If you were to hear these pretended philosophers speak of politics and morality, you would shudder with reason at the corruption of their hearts and understanding; and you would earnestly pray that authority may never be so far degraded as to fall into such vile hands. But do not judge philosophy by their miserable writings, or by their mad discourses, any more than you would judge of honour by a bully, of religion by an inquisitor, or of medicine by a quack. And if the disgust
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with which they inspire you, should lower in your estimation the value of the sciences and of liberty, turn your attention immediately to the cruel maxims of the partizans of ignorance and slavery ; you will feel equally indignant at their cruelty and their pride. You will hear them coldly calculate the number of the victims whom they would wish to have it in their power to sacrifice to the security of their privileges, or to the success of their pretensions ; and you will be obliged, in order to reconcile yourself with your fellow-creatures, to read over again the meditations of the true philosophers, or to have recourse to those moderate men who have cultivated their understanding from pure motives, and whose vanity has not obscured their natural good sense.

It is true that Condorcet, and some other learned men, have maintained the most extravagant opinions ; but they had no influence in the beginning of the Revolution : and it ought not to be forgotten, that these men, of great acquirements in various sciences and in literature, but so little versed in politics and morality, could not however agree with the most furious of the demagogues ; that they wished to put a stop to the effusion of human blood, and that their resistance cost some of them their lives, and
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put others in the greatest danger. Besides, it is well known that philosophy does not confer infallibility. There is a material difference in saying that it has occasioned the Revolution of France, and all the misfortunes which have followed it, or in acknowledging that some philosophers, misled by their passions and fallacious systems, have placed themselves among the number of the factious; and that the chiefs of those factions have employed, after the fall of the ancient government, the errors of some philosophers, in order to destroy the religious sentiments and the morality of the people,

But how many other learned men are there who have not concealed the horror which they felt on account of the excesses of the Revolution, and who would never so far debase themselves as to submit without a murmur, to the yoke of tyranny! Run over the list of those celebrated Societies, the glory of France and of Europe—of the *Academy of Sciences*—of that of *Inscriptions*—of the *French Academy*—and of several others in the principal towns in France.—Enquire into the opinions and the fate of their members, during the last years; and see if the greatest part of the literati and philosophers have not condemned the crimes of the Revolution—if they have not refused to serve the tyrants

tyrants—if they have not been their victims. The illustrious Lavoisier, the sensible Bouchier, and several other persons, distinguished by their talents, have perished on the scaffold. A great number of others have been separated from their families, and shut up in prisons in expectation of death, and have been delivered only by the unforeseen fall of those who had proscribed them. If the tyranny of the Committees of the Convention had subsisted some time longer, very far from favouring the philosophers, it would have succeeded in entirely destroying the arts and sciences; it would have rendered France a country of barbarians, governed like the republic of Algiers, or like that of the Mamelukes.

The courage and *dévouement* of Raynal have not been sufficiently admired. Some declamations, and some licentious principles, had sullied his beautiful History of the European Establishments in the Two Indies, and had secured to him beforehand the favour of all those who wished for a total overthrow of civil order. He might have been intoxicated with the applauses of the multitude, and might have placed himself in the first rank of those who directed them at pleasure. He disdained an ephemeral glory, that would be succeeded by eternal

nal disgrace. He was struck with indignation at seeing the illusive measures and the temerity of those who reigned in the first assembly. He dared to censure them publicly, and to point out all the evils which they were about to bring upon France.

Even Voltaire himself, if he had lived during the Revolution, although he had so often insulted religion and morality, would not have been so ignorant as to favour anarchy, nor so cruel as to applaud assassination.

Would J. J. Rousseau, who despised the vices of the great, have honoured the vilest of human beings under the dominion of the Clubs of Jacobins? He esteemed more the wife of a coalman than the mistress of a prince: would he then have been satisfied with the dissolution of manners which was represented as the triumph of reason? What would Montesquieu have said of the deliberations of the Assemblies of France—he who pointed out the conduct of the Long Parliament of England as the most beautiful and most dreadful spectacle which could be contemplated, by men who wished to instruct themselves in the science of governments?

A doctrine, the cruel effects of which in the course of the Revolution cannot be called in
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question, is that which recommends in politics to consider the end rather than the means; and which teaches, that in order to produce a general good, it is allowable to violate justice towards individuals. Thus weak man has the audacity to wish, in imitation of the Divinity, to produce good by means of evil; as if it were equally in his power to ensure the success of his designs, and to make compensation to the victims. It is the mad Phaëton who dares to undertake the direction of the chariot of the sun, and who sets the world on fire. This impious doctrine effaces the shame attached to criminality, and disposes the mind to applaud itself as for the most glorious action. It renders man insensible to the cries of innocence; substitutes in the place of the moral sentiment which Nature has placed in our hearts, vile calculations of interest, and of probabilities in favour of a system. It produces a total neglect of the rights which belong to all men, and the absurd supposition of a public security without that of individuals. It represents one's country as an unjust mother, who sacrifices without regret numbers of her children for those she loves the most: whereas she ought to subject them all to the same obligations for the common interest of the family.

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I have been witness of the effects of this doctrine ; I have seen how much power it had in corrupting men formerly virtuous. But it cannot be said that it has been created by the philosophers : it was always the inseparable companion of every species of fanaticism. In every age there have been men who, in order to attain a just or plausible object, have gloried in being indifferent as to the nature of the means. An enlightened religion doubtless condemns such a system : we are nevertheless acquainted with pious frauds and great crimes commanded, in order to maintain or propagate various systems of religion. It is well known that the art of deceiving and of injuring has appeared so indispensable in politics, that it is considered as an essential part of the talents of a statesman. Accordingly the word *politic* has become in a great many circumstances synonymous with cunning, intrigue, hypocrisy. In the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, the Italians were celebrated in this infamous science, of which Machiavelli was the most able professor : and how many ministers are even yet its declared partizans ! How many are there for whom the interest of one sovereign, or that of one people, to the prejudice of the rights of another, is their only

only rule of action *! They smile with disdain in speaking of those weak-minded persons who wish that justice should be equally sacred towards the lowest individual as towards millions of men. Is it surprising that what some have practised in favour of an ancient authority, should be imitated by others who wish to establish a new one? The first are less dangerous, it is true, because they have fewer occasions of putting their principles in practice; whereas when the ancient government of a country is destroyed, the fatal effects of this opinion are multiplied in proportion to the number of rivals who endeavour to seize upon power: but they are all equally culpable. There is no kind of difference between the evil conscience of Mirabeau, who said that the *little morality is an overmatch for the great*; and that the chiefs

* *Note of the Translator.* — Notwithstanding the number of fine phrases of the new Government of France, and the impression which they have made on the people of Europe, so as to render them almost blind to their own dearest interests, this reproach could never have been applied with greater justice to any administration, in any country, than to that of Bonaparte. Whatever his conduct in the interior may be, he has certainly conducted himself with a haughtiness, injustice, and Machiavelism towards other nations, which his warmest admirers, if they have any respect for virtue, for honour, or for justice, dare not defend.

chiefs of a nation, whether elective or hereditary, who pretend that every thing ought to yield to *reasons of State*. If some philosophers have adopted such maxims, no motive authorises us to reproach philosophy with it, any more than to reproach religion or monarchical government, because we have seen religious men and royalists maintain the same error.

Before I finish this Dissertation on the Influence of the Philosophers, I shall beg leave to offer a few reflections on the word *Jacobin*. It is time to fix the precise signification of a word which recalls to the mind so many crimes, which must inspire so much horror, which it is so dangerous and so criminal to abuse, and which however is continually abused. Its origin is known:—it is well known that in 1790 some men, who wished to prepare France for great changes, formed in the metropolis a society, in order to deliberate on public affairs; they assembled in a convent of religious persons denominated *Jacobins*. This name was conferred upon them by derision; they gloried in it; and this denomination was extended to all the societies of the same kind established in the provinces. They were composed of enthusiasts, a great number of ignorant persons easily misled, and of many covetous and cruel men, who
disguised

disguised their ambition under the appearance of an ardent zeal for the general happiness. The members of those societies corrupted and bribed the populace of the cities, whom it was so easy to render ferocious. Become the chiefs of a numerous troop of brigands, they struck all the citizens with terror, and subjugated the Legislative Assemblies. They caused those to be put to death without pity who opposed their opinions, those whose riches they wished to seize, those who disapproved of their fury, those even who refused to approve of them, their own associates, in order to punish them for having stopped in the career of their crimes from lassitude or remorse, or in order to diminish the number of their rivals. In the eyes of those tyrants, all the qualities which command respect, all the advantages which procure influence, became motives of proscription, merely because the persons who possessed them did not belong to their sect, and might one day obtain the affections of the people.

There is no system purely political, and considered independently of the actions of those who adopt them, which can entitle them to a name so justly odious. A man is not criminal, if, remaining obedient to the laws, he delivers his opinion in a public discussion, without obli-

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ging others to conform to it. It is not because the Jacobins professed maxims contrary to good order, that they ought to excite indignation. If they had taught false doctrines without propagating them, like Mahomet, by the fear of death, it would have been easy to refute them, and to prevent their consequences; so much the more easy, as, even in the time of their greatest power, they had never seduced but a small part of the French nation. It is the same with respect to the publication of principles favourable to an absolute democracy, as with respect to every other false doctrine. Truth would triumph from the very first moment, if respect for justice were preserved in discussion, if constraint were never to be substituted for persuasion.

An unlimited democracy is, it is true, the most pernicious of the three simple forms of government, and the most difficult to maintain: but the despotism of one, and an absolute aristocracy, can only be preferred to it as the lesser evil. The adoption of a system exclusively in favour of one of these three forms, is not a crime; it is an error which all the friends of liberty will refute, in acknowledging nevertheless that the love of an unlimited democracy might be the delirium of a good man without experience;
whereas

whereas that of the despotism of one, or an absolute aristocracy, often indicates selfishness and cruelty. The democratic maxims of the Jacobins have occasioned so many misfortunes, only because criminal means have been employed in order to gain them an ascendancy. They were, for most of the Jacobins, only a pretext which served to mask their ambition: what proves it is, that, after having acknowledged the plurality of voices as the only legitimate sign of the will of the Sovereign, they have often taken the liberty of excluding from the assemblies the majority of the citizens, of annulling the choice of the people, and of despising the known wishes of the greatest part of the nation.

It is therefore having a false idea of *Jacobinism*, to confound it with the love of democracy. A man cannot be a Jacobin, unless with anarchical systems he unites a mind sufficiently atrocious to wish for the ruin or death of those who have not the same opinions. Nothing, however, is more common than to hear this infamous title given even to those who profess respect for all established governments, but who suppose in all the same duties, at the same time that they acknowledge in every people those rights which the friends of huma-

nity ought always to claim from Sovereigns, without disturbing the order and tranquillity of the State.

Those men who, for the interest of an absolute monarchy, or of some privileged families, or even for the interest of the best possible form of government, and the most perfect religious institutions, should violate all the principles of justice, and be inaccessible to every sentiment of pity, would completely resemble the Jacobins, precisely in that which ought to excite the indignation of good men; that is, in their criminal means, and in their indifference for the misfortunes of others. Thus, when we would transfer this name to others than those who have gloried in it, we might say, that there are monarchical, aristocratical, and superstitious *Jacobins*, as well as democratical.

Such then is the result of the foregoing reflexions on the subject of the influence attributed to the modern philosophers in the Revolution of France. They have contributed to spread among all classes the hatred of arbitrary power; but philosophy has no connexion whatever with the circumstances which have produced it. The crimes and misfortunes which have accompanied it, have been chiefly the effects of the composition of the orders, of the imprudences of the Court,

Court, of the ignorance of political principles, and of the corruption of manners. I acknowledge that these causes have given greater importance to the false theories of several celebrated authors : but, in assigning a part to the errors of modern philosophy in the calamities of which we are witnesses, it is also just to assign a very great part to the errors of those who are not philosophers—to the resistance of those who endeavour to maintain the ancient abuses, and to revive the prejudices destroyed by the knowledge of the age.

It is likewise just to acknowledge, that the labours of the philosophers have had great influence on the changes which justice authorised, which reason distinguishes in the midst of so many errors and crimes, and which can only be condemned by fanaticism or ignorance.

OF THE INFLUENCE

ATTRIBUTED TO THE

Societies of Free-Masons.

THOSE who maintain that the Revolution of France is the work of modern philosophy, cannot, it would seem, well agree with those who represent it as the work of the Free-Masons. The authors of some writings, however, have contrived to attribute it to three different conspiracies; and if you should admit, without examination, all that they affirm, they would prove to you, first, that all has been done by the philosophers—afterwards, that all has been done by the Free-Masons—and, lastly, by the German Illuminati.

The origin of the societies of Free-Masons is not exactly known; they have themselves very different notions on this subject. Some pretend that their ceremonies are derived from the ancient mysteries which passed from Egypt and Phœnicia among the people of Europe; others assure us, that they were transmitted to them from the schools of Pythagoras; others, taking

taking advantage of the principal allegory of their mysteries, that of the temple of Solomon, give themselves out as the successors of the workmen of that temple ; others, in short, pretend that their Order is a secret continuation of that of the Templars. In making these different suppositions, they have in view to give themselves more importance, and to render their origin illustrious. Notwithstanding so many contradictions, they have succeeded in causing it to be believed that their Order has existed for a great number of ages: they have found it the more easy to gain credit to this opinion, because in every age and in every country there have existed secret associations with signs and emblems known only to the initiated, and because the bulk of men are very much disposed to consider objects as similar, whenever they are made to perceive some common marks of connexion.

One of the writers who represent the Free-Masons as the authors of the Revolution of France, seems to believe that they are derived from the Templars: he has reviv'd against those ancient Knights, so cruelly persecuted in the beginning of the fourteenth century, the accusations which served as pretexts to their enemies, and which were abundantly worthy of the ignorance and ferocity of those barbarous times.

He supposes that they entered into an engagement to live in the most shameful debauchery; that they burnt the children produced by their libertinism; that they denied Christ, insulted his image: and he adds, that they adored the head of a man—as if such monsters had any need of a system of worship! The confessions forced from them by the most dreadful torments or menaces, are in his eyes converted into undoubted proofs. He terms criminal obstinacy the recantations of those who, even in the midst of the flames, protested their innocence. His conscience, however, revolts at the absurd supposition that all the Knights Templars were capable of such an excess of depravity, under the appearance of religious zeal: he says, that a third of those Knights were ignorant of the crimes of the rest. He does not perceive that, by this assertion, he gives the lie to those false witnesses whose impostures he repeats; for those witnesses had asserted that the novices were received with the most obscene ceremonies, and entered into the most criminal engagements. The same writer afterwards says the pretended doctrine of the Templars may be traced back as far as the fanatic Manès. He says, that this Manès wished for a community of property; whereas he disdained the use of his own

own property, and commanded his scholars to remain poor, and possess nothing, as so many other Christians have done who pretended to perfection. He apologizes for the Princes, Magistrates, and Councils, who with such cruel rage persecuted the unfortunate Albigenes. These Albigenes were Manicheans; the Templars were Manicheans; the Free-Masons, successors of Templars, are Manicheans—the executioners of the Manicheans, Templars, and Albigenes, were virtuous men. It was thought just either to massacre or burn those heretics.—Let us draw the conclusion, although he dare not present it himself—*The Free-Masons ought to be exterminated.* It would be too dull a mode of passing one's life to attempt to refute all the absurdities which are related or printed—nor should we be able to convince those ignorant persons, whose knowledge of history is derived only from the writings of the Abbé Barruel. With respect to those who have any notions of history, and who are capable of reflexion, they know very well what they are to think of the accusations renewed against the Templars and the Albigenes. They know that the former had in their Order many men corrupted by their riches; but that their vices had not the slightest connexion with the spirit of their institutions,

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with the doctrine which was taught them—that it was right to suppress a useless Order, but that the dreadful persecution which they suffered, was occasioned by the vengeance of a covetous and cruel Monarch—that jealousy and superstition were in arms against them, and that they were condemned on reports invented by hatred and repeated by folly—that fifty-nine of those unfortunate men, who were burnt in one day, preferred that cruel death to the cowardice of acknowledging themselves guilty. Their grand master, Molay, being on the pile, might have saved his life, if he would have acknowledged himself criminal: he swore that he was innocent—he proved it by his heroic courage, by his religious sentiments; and the people were indignant at the Pope and the King who conducted themselves with such folly and cruelty. With respect to the Albigenes, if they had been the enemies of all social order, they would not have had for protectors the King of Arragon, the Count of Thoulouse, the Count of Foix, and several other Lords. The Pope ordered them to be cut off, because their opinions threatened his power; and in order the better to defend it against all examination, he caused the laity to be prohibited, by a council in the city of Thoulouse, from reading the Old and New Testament.

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They who know what fanaticism and the spirit of party can do, will never admit as proofs the accusations which the adversaries of a religious or political sect allow themselves to bring forward. It ought not to be forgotten that the Jews were formerly accused of adoring in their temple the head of an ass; and that the enemies of the first Christians accused them of the same crimes which served as pretexts for the persecution of the Albigenes and of the Templars. We shall not stop at the assertion that the Free-Masons are the successors of the Knights of the Temple, because the chiefs of the Lodges are denominated Grand Masters. In order to maintain that they are disciples of Manès, they ground themselves on this—that they have signs and different degrees; that, in their mystic language, they cry out *To me the son of the widow*; and that, when they place under their eyes the representation of the carcass of *Hieram*, they say *Mac benac*, words which signify, according to them, *the flesh comes off the bones*—and so it happens that Manès was adopted by a widow, he instituted signs and degrees among his partisans, and a King of Persia caused him to be dead. All this is more than ridiculous: but what do the reveries respecting the origin of the Free-Masons signify to us? Let
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us see what may be said with most probability on the subject.

In the seventeenth century, some architects and some masons united in London, in order to form a *club* or society. Persons who were strangers to their profession were admitted into it, and were denominated Free-Masons. It is believed that, after the murder of Charles the First, the royalists wishing to assemble together, without exposing themselves to the persecutions of the victorious party, took advantage of an association which not appearing to have any political view, occasioned no uneasiness to the agents of the Protector; and that it was by these means that the Lodges were rapidly multiplied in England and in Scotland. If this circumstance be not well established, it is at least certain that the partizans of the House of Stuart, after the revolution of 1688, and especially the Jesuits, gave to Free-Masonry a particular bias in favour of the Pretender and of the Roman Catholic religion. The symbols, words, and signs, were adopted in order to conceal them from the observation of the Government, and to disguise their real views. The idea of these signs must very readily have suggested itself—it is a natural consequence of secret societies. Besides, Dr. Robison, who adopts on the origin
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of Free-Masonry the opinions we now present, says, with reason, that it is possible they might have wished to imitate some working masons who, in some parts of Europe, did not acknowledge among one another the apprentices and journeymen, but by certain signs and words agreed upon.

Bode, a learned German, who had frequented the most celebrated Lodges, and who had devoted much of his time and labour to researches respecting Free-Masonry, maintains, in a manuscript memorial which I have before me, that it is of English origin. He proves this from the form of the oath in which the perjured are threatened with the punishment determined by the English laws for those guilty of high treason—that of having their entrails torn out and burnt; and in which it is said besides, that he shall be thrown into the sea *a cable's length, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours*. He considers Free-Masonry as an invention of the Jesuits. According to him, Hieram killed by two rebel journeymen, is nothing more than the Roman Hierarchy destroyed by Luther and Calvin. He remarks that the acacia leaf, the symbol so dear to Free-Masons, exactly resembles the episcopal sign; that Free-Masonry is a religious and Christian institution; that this cannot be doubted,
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if we consider the respect of the Free-Masons for the Bible, and especially for the Gospel of St. John, as also their allegory of the temple of Solomon. Bode says, with Dr. Robison, that Free-Masonry passed over from England to the continent; and was established with King James and his Irish followers in the castle of St. Germain; that on this occasion the degree of St. Andrew of Scotland was suggested, with some emblems relative to the destruction of the power of the Stuarts and to their hopes; that from St. Germain Free-Masonry was diffused throughout France, and carried into Germany and Italy.* As the Lodges multiplied,

* *Note of the Author.*—It is asserted that there exists a manuscript in the University library of Oxford, which affords reason to presume that Free-Masonry has existed in England for 260 years; and in which it is said that the secrets of the Order were brought from the East by some Venetian merchants. But this manuscript is probably only a *masonic* fraud. If the antiquity of this Order were real, there would be a far greater number of testimonies, and it would be impossible to explain the silence of all the writers of former ages. The Venetian merchants would not have reserved their secret for England alone. There would have been Free-Masons in Italy long before; and the Italians would have made proselytes in France and in Germany, before they would have thought of the English. It is clearly demonstrated that the Lodges of the Continent have all a late origin. There were none of them in Germany before the year 1735.

multiplied, the object of the institution was lost sight of. So many Free-Masons were strangers to the interests of the Pretender, and to those of the Jesuits, that it was necessary to suffer them to remain ignorant of the origin of their Order, or rather to suppose one, in order to disguise the true one. The majority of those who exerted themselves to receive new members, had no other view but that of rendering their society more interesting; and especially of augmenting the contributions necessary for their feasts, an essential part of their system. Attracted by curiosity, by the satisfaction of belonging to a numerous Order wherein were to be found persons of respectability, and by the hope of being protected, candidates presented themselves in crowds. The secret no longer consisted in any thing but words, signs, and ceremonies, which lead to suppose another secret more important, which is traced step by step, and at last nothing is discovered but other words and other signs. In short, those assemblies were merely fraternal associations of men, who assisted one another in case of need, who succoured indigence, and gave themselves up to symbolic ceremonies, the mysterious sense of which was no longer known, and which every one interpreted as he pleased: but those symbols

bols imposed on the imagination of the profane, and agreeably occupied that of the Free-Masons; for there is, in the most serious men, an inclination to return now and then to amusements similar to those of their infancy; and, as a man of sense has said, The Free-Masons, as well as numbers of children, pass a great part of their time in their lodges à *jouer à la chapelle*.*

Free-Masonry preserved, in the majority of the Lodges of England, its first simplicity; that is, they were contented with the degrees adopted from the profession to which it owed its origin or its principal allegories; the degrees of apprentice, journeyman, and master. In France it became complicated. It acquired forms more seducing for the puerility of some, and the curiosity of others. The French were at that time passionately fond of ribbons and titles; they did not confine themselves therefore to the ignoble instrument of the trowel, the rule, the square, and the apron. They pompously be-daubed themselves with *cordons*; they had different kinds of knighthood; and the brethren in the lodges gave themselves both a worldly and a mystic importance: and it was in this
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* *Jouer à la chapelle*—A childish sport in Roman Catholic countries, in imitation of the service of a church or chapel.

state that Masonry was carried by the French into various parts of Europe.

It is not therefore surprising that, with so many means of exciting curiosity, pride, and even ambition, Free-Masonry was able easily to diffuse itself; and that there have been, among its members, men of all characters and of all opinions. Those who are disposed to credulity, make a serious occupation of it; seek with ardour the explanation of its emblems; receive with eagerness all the fables which can enhance its importance in their eyes; and continually flatter themselves with the hope of discovering a great secret which will render them rich and powerful: but reasonable men, who have become Free-Masons only from curiosity, or seduced by the example of their friends, find no other interest in it but that of a distribution of alms, of assisting at the feast, and being the witnesses of the jokes passed upon the novices; for there is among the Free-Masons a very great number of persons respectable for their learning and probity, who, for the most part, when old-age has made them lose the relish for amusements, give up masonic labours. One cannot testify to Free-Masons of good sense the surprise which Cicero expressed with respect to the

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augurs of Rome—they never look at one another without laughing.

What a valuable resource for all quacks are such societies, in which so many men torment their imaginations in order to discover a purpose for their mysterious ceremonies, although for a long period they have had none! When men feel the want of fixing on an opinion, in order to deliver themselves from uncertainty, they are disposed to believe every thing, and especially the marvellous. Accordingly, we see crowding to the Lodges the alchymists, or the knaves and fools who pretend that they possess the art of making gold—that they know the universal remedy, and the extraordinary properties of *Nostrum*. Some private Lodges of Rosicrucians have even been formed. This name was given in the last century to some men who pretended to possess marvellous secrets; and after the Lodges of Free-Masons were known, some impostors, calling themselves Rosicrucians, conceived other degrees, and some new ceremonies. Other impostors chose likewise the Masonic Societies in order to perform their cabalistic tricks, their conjurations, and their enchantments. Some fanatics who have been denominated *Theosophs*, from the name anciently in use for the
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inspired alchymists, presented themselves as acquainted with sublime truths, as having an immediate connexion with intermediate beings.

The Lodges, therefore, were not directed by one system only: they formed a great number of different sects, which had nothing in common but the three first degrees, and the signs which belong to them, and who pretended to be exclusively orthodox.

It is more especially in the present century that quacks or fools, shunning the light of science and maintaining that they alone enjoy it, have sheltered themselves in the shades of Free-Masonry, in order to deceive some dupes and ignorant persons by their impostures and their lies.

In the sect called the *Stricte Observance*, it is inculcated that some Templars, on the destruction of their Order, had fled from the Continent into England, and there disguised themselves as Masons, from whence arose *Free-Masonry*. Some impostors have not failed to take advantage of this belief. They have pretended that they knew the secret depositaries of the ancient treasures of the Knights of the Temple; they have offered to communicate the high degrees which render worthy of partaking of those treasures; or they have, under this pre-

text, extorted considerable sums from those who trusted to their promises. Others said, that the treasures of the Templars were in the hands of the ecclesiastical brethren of this order; and that it was necessary, in order to obtain a part of it, to take orders. It is affirmed that several great Lords of France and Germany, several of whom were even Protestants, caused themselves to be *tonfured*, and generously paid those who laughed at their follies.

In 1772 a coffee-merchant of Leipzig, named Schröpfer, maintained that it was impossible to be a real Free-Mason without exercising magic. He established a lodge in his own house, and he there exhibited ghosts. He went with a pistol in his hand to insult another Lodge, which he accused of heresy. A Prince, protector of the insulted brethren, and who was more zealous for *Free-Masonry* than personal liberty, caused him to be beat with a stick, for which he was obliged to give a receipt. Some months after, the quack went to Dresden, and appeared there under the name of the Count of Stainville, a French colonel; duped the same Prince who had caused him to be beaten, and exhibited ghosts to him. Unmasked by the French Envoy, he returned to Leipzig, promised great wonders to his adepts, which he could not accomplish; and

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as they pressed him to fulfil his engagements, he conducted them into a wood, and there blew out his brains in their presence.

Some Lodges at Berlin still explained, some years ago, all their allegories in a mystic sense. The Rosicrucians and the Theosophs worked miracles there without number; and it is well known, that several derived great advantage from the credulity of some powerful men, who united every species of weakness.

Many Lodges of France and Germany, and some of England, had adopted the reveries of a Swede, named Swedenborg, who had written on the marriages of the next world, on the heavenly Jerusalem, and who pretended to receive visits from St. Peter and St. Paul.

Diseases having always afforded to imposture resources as fruitful as those afforded by Free-Masonry, the quacks combined every advantage, when they presented themselves as acquainted both with the secrets of Free-Masonry and with those of medicine. It is thus that St. Germain passed through the Lodges of Free-Masons, in order to sell immortality, and related what he had seen several ages before; that the Grand Magus, or Grand Copht Cagliostro established Egyptian Lodges, distributed drops to cure all evils, worked miracles

without number; but who, of all the secrets which he pretended to possess, had only one real, that of lying with effrontery, and of rendering subservient to his success all the weaknesses of the human heart.

At Lyons, a person named St. Martin took it into his head, in 1775 or 1776, to publish a work entitled, *Of Errors and of Truth*, in which, under the most enigmatic style, is found the doctrine, so ancient and so universally diffused, of a good and an evil principle—of a former state of perfection of the human species—of the fall from, and of the possibility of returning to, this perfection. What attractions for little minds seriously occupied with masonic follies, in the studied obscurity of the expressions, the mysterious use of numbers, in imitation of Pythagoras and of the Platonicians! What an easy glory for men greedy of celebrity, to appear to know what the most learned do not understand; to give themselves an air of profound penetration, and to be able to repeat proudly, *You are not made to understand!* A great number of Lodges of Free-Masons immediately adopted the work of St. Martin as a revelation; and the Martinists became much more numerous than the Rosicrucians had been.

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Dr. Mesmer having announced the great discovery of animal magnetism, the principle of life of all organized beings, the soul of all that breathes, which he directed by moving his hands, which he placed on iron rods, in a basket, on a string, in a glass of water—by means of which he caused his patients to laugh, weep, yawn, sleep, fall into delirium, into a swoon, into a lethargy, or into convulsions—by means of which he rendered them sleep-walkers, cataleptic, physicians, prophets, and especially epileptic—a great number of Free-Masons, lovers of the marvellous, hastened to buy his secret. Nothing else was to be seen in the great towns of France but women in convulsions, and fools exerting themselves to frighten them by their grimaces, and who, at the sight of the contortions of their victims, admired the power of their talents. Soon afterwards some Free-Masons, wishing to enrich their mystic doctrine with the discovery of the Austrian Doctor, maintained that what he believed to be the effect of a particular fluid, was only the result of the power of a man superior in perfection; that the motion of the hands, or the communication of an organized body, was by no means necessary. They magnetized by the Divine grace, and by the force of faith and

of the will, through walls—at great distances—from Paris even to St. Domingo.

In those Lodges in which mystic opinions occupied the attention, care was taken not to admit to the highest degrees those who were not disposed to believe every thing. The Rosicrucians, the Martinists, the Magnetizers, and Cagliostro, did not promise to prove any thing but what their followers were willing to admit without examination. When the miracles could not be performed, they took care to attribute the cause to the presence of some incredulous person—an admirable way of replying to all objections!

Some Free-Masons in France and in Germany have conceived the idea of admitting women to the mysteries. Some Lodges of adoption had been established for them. Cagliostro being in Courtland, in 1779, received some among his initiated. Of this number was Madame de Recke, whose influence he wished to employ, in order to come at the Empress Catherine. She was for some time imposed upon by the surprising operations of the Italian juggler; but she discovered all the baseness of mind, all the immorality of this impostor, and considered it as her duty to denounce him to the public.

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The Author of the *Memoirs of Jacobinism* pretends, that in the Lodges of adoption morality was often violated. Such assemblages are not, it is true, conformable to the rules of decency ; but there is a great difference between thinking that an assembly may favour criminal intrigues, and believing that they renounce every sentiment of modesty. There are accusations so very atrocious, that a just man, before he can adopt them, will expect the most authentic testimonies : and he who is not afraid of publishing such charges, and is not in a situation to produce certain proofs of them, ought to be severely punished by the laws, or, where that cannot be, by the indignation of all good men. Such is that which the Abbé Barruel has ventured to bring forward against a society which assembled at Ermenonville, after the death of J. J. Rousseau, under the direction of the quack St. Germain. He says that the women received into that society were common to all the brethren, with the exception of her whom the chief had chosen. This assertion is contrary to all probability. St. Germain was fond of gaining admiration by relating surprising stories—of passing for an extraordinary man—of deceiving those who wished for miracles: but
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some persons who have known him, and whom he has sometimes duped, have assured me that he never gave either examples or lessons of libertinism.

Although the greatest part of the Masonic Societies have adopted superstitious reveries, they nevertheless, in some French Lodges, cultivated the sciences and literature before the Revolution. Their fraternal banquets had become the banquets of Epicurus, and their meetings philosophical lyceums; where, under the mask of Free-Masonry, and free from all spies, they discussed without restraint all sorts of subjects. It has often happened that the orators, misled by the principles of some modern philosophers, have declaimed against religious opinions: but the Lodges in which, notwithstanding some dangerous errors, they endeavoured at least to exercise their reason, were very few in number, in comparison of those in which they were occupied with mystic ideas, and especially of those in which the only purpose was to form an agreeable society, and in which the most important ceremony was to drink with *three times three*.

Doubtless one may be a Free-Mason, as I have already said, without adopting extravagant

gant opinions, without being either a villain or a dupe ; but these associations appear to me to be more dangerous than useful. Their charity is not established on true principles, because they prefer, in the distribution of their succours, those who know the signs of the initiated. It is not that I suppose any obligation to love all men alike : but this system is only a hypocritical mask, under which is concealed the insensibility of those who love nobody. I know that there are gradations in our affections and in our duties ; that it is right to prefer, in the services which we have it in our power to perform, our own families to those of others, our friends to indifferent persons, our neighbours to those whom we do not know, our countrymen to strangers ; but of all the connexions which can unite men there certainly is not one more frivolous than that of a particular manner of pressing the hand, or the pronunciation of some fantastical words. If the Free-Masons had a predilection only for those of the same Lodge ; if they did not confer the same favour on pretended brethren whom they have never seen, and with whose conduct they are unacquainted, they might be considered as friends who mutually assist each other. They also assist the indigent profane who are suffering around them ; but there
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is reason to regret that they give to so many vagabonds who employ Free-Masonry as a title for begging with boldness, and for living in idleness.

The chief danger which I perceive in the Societies of Free-Masons, is rather that of the influence of jugglers than of political intriguers. It is a principle generally admitted in all the Lodges, that the orators ought never to make the established religions or governments the subject of their discourse. I acknowledge that on some very few occasions some of the brethren have not exactly conformed to this rule: I even acknowledge that the Lodges of Free-Masons might easily become a centre of union for conspirators; nor do I by any means doubt the right which belongs to the public authority to watch over all secret societies, and to prohibit them by law, the moment that there are just suspicions of their intriguing against the tranquillity of the State. I say *suspicions*; for there is no need of proofs in order to put an end to associations vicious in their very nature. It ought not to be the same with societies that do not act under the shade of mystery. The legislator, before he attempts to destroy them, ought to wait till they have threatened the general security by certain plans of violence and of revolt.

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Tyrants alone can fear the assemblies of peaceable citizens, who do not bind themselves by oaths, and do not conceal themselves from the inspection of the magistrates; but at the same time, none but governments sunk in folly or madness can be indifferent to what may pass, in all assemblies whatsoever, contrary to good order; nor should the magistrates ever suffer them to conceal themselves from the public inspection *.

Although I am persuaded that secret societies are dangerous, I do not hesitate to maintain that the Free-Masons have not had the slightest influence on the Revolution. It has been said that the equality professed in the Lodges had contributed to the destruction of the ancient government; but this equality is not at all relative to civil order. Free-Masonry condemns not riches and dignities; it considers men of all ranks only with regard to the connexion which unites them as members of a fraternal association. This kind of equality, very far from being dangerous, is one of those virtues most recommended by religion and morality. Such institutions as
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* *Note of the Author.*—The present King of Prussia made enquiry into the principles adopted by the Free-Masons of his States. After having been convinced of the agreement of their principles with sound morality, he thought it his duty to grant them his protection.

might weaken pride without destroying subordination, and which might recall the rich and the magistrates to sentiments of natural equality, without injuring the legal power of the latter, and the respect due to their functions, would be of the highest advantage to morality and happiness; and in this sense Lessing has thought that the Societies of Free-Masons were useful. I should think so too, if they did not render the sentiments of benevolence which we owe to all our fellow-creatures, an exclusive privilege for a particular association.

And how can Christians, if they have not the most absurd inconsistency in their principles—if their religion be not confined to mere words, blame the equality of Free-Masons? They ought to know that the doctrine of the Gospel, which commands respect for the civil authority, commands at the same time to treat all men as brethren.

I do not believe that in the Lodges liberty was ever spoken of. If this word was ever pronounced, it was like that of equality, in a sense foreign to politics and entirely moral. The author of *Memoirs of Jacobinism*, after having said that the principles of equality and of liberty were the foundations of the doctrine of the Free-Masons, and the real object even of their

their first degrees, recollecting that he was writing in England, has had the prudence to add, that most of them attached no importance to these expressions, and that they were explained only in the higher degrees, unknown in the English Lodges. Thus, according to this writer, the English Free-Masons, more numerous, and of a more ancient origin than those of other countries, are the only ones who do not comprehend the doctrine of their Order. It was necessary to suppose this, in order to be able to erase them from the list of proscription. He extols their respect for religious opinions and for authority. When he speaks of Free-Masons in general, they are impious, rebels, successors of the Templars and of the Albigeneses: but afterwards he says, all those of England are innocent; moreover, that all the apprentices, journeymen, and masters, in every part of the world, are innocent. There are none guilty except in the higher degrees, which are not essential to that institution, and which are sought after only by a small number of persons. But a Revolution has happened in France, and he wishes to accuse the Free-Masons of it:—in order however to get rid of this difficulty, he forgets that he has reserved the criminal doctrine for the higher degrees; and he affirms, that of six hundred

dred thousand French Free-Masons, there are only a hundred thousand who have not adopted this doctrine. He has not taken the trouble to explain to us whether, by a particular exception, the false principles of the higher degrees of other countries had in France been communicated to all the inferior orders, or if they were unknown to them. In the first case, how came the hundred thousand virtuous Free-Masons not to separate themselves from an Order whose opinions they must have detested? In the second, how can it be believed that there were five times as many Free-Masons in the higher degrees, as in those of master, journeyman, and apprentice, when it is publicly notorious that these last were a hundred times most numerous?

The same writer affirms that, in the degree of *elected*, the candidate cuts off the head of a manikin, in order to avenge the death of Hieram. He sees in this severed head the emblem of that of a King: but what resemblance can there exist between a Monarch and Hieram, employed to pay the workmen at the Temple of Solomon, and murdered by three journeymen, to whom he refused to give the word of master? If this allegory had any political signification, it would be much more favourable than hurtful to authority, since it recommends
 vengeance

vengeance for the death of a superior murdered by three rebels.

The same author further says, that the Rosicrucians represent in their ceremonies the death of Christ, the darkness, and the earthquake, mentioned in the Gospel. He might have added, what I have read in the manuscript of Bode, that they use the imposition of hands, and employ Aaron's rod. He quotes these superstitions as proofs of their infidelity: he pretends that they give to the letters INRI the following interpretation—*The Jew of NAZARETH conducted by RAPHAEL into JUDEA*. I know not whether the Rosicrucians make use of this ridiculous explanation. The Abbé Barruel sees in it the intention of insulting Christianity—he nevertheless acknowledges that many Rosicrucians were unacquainted with this intention, and that they believed they had returned to the purity of the Christian doctrine: but if they believed this, the contempt of religious opinions was therefore not taught in their Lodges, and was not the object of their association, as he wishes it to be understood.

The Rosicrucians, if any of them still exist, are the most contemptible of the Free-Masons; not from their impiety, for they are extremely credulous, nor because of their systems of go-

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vernment,

vernment, for they take no interest whatever in public affairs—but because they form a school of dupes and quacks. Bode, who detested them, asserts that their superiors exacted an oath from their novices to conceal no secret from them, to reveal to them even whatever should be told them in confidence. He adds, that in some of their Lodges it was recommended to employ the *aqua tophana* against the persecutors of the truth*.

The Abbé Barruel quotes several persons who have attested to him, that they had learned in the Lodges of Free-Masons some dreadful secrets, and the most criminal doctrine. He quotes also several works which represent the Free-Masons under the most odious colours. If his testimonies were unexceptionable, they would only affect some particular societies, not the Rosicrucians in general, and much less still the other Free-Masons. He speaks of a degree called *Radosfs*, in which an oath was taken to avenge the death of Molay, and, of hatred to royalty and religion; and if we are to believe him, the Duke of Orleans had taken this degree a little before the convocation of the States-General.

* *Note of the Author.*—Notwithstanding this assertion of Bode, I am no more inclined to believe in the *aqua tophana* of the Rosicrucians, than in that of the other Free-Masons.

General.—But where then is the proof of such an absurdity? How can it be supposed that there should be, in the eighteenth century, men eager to avenge on their coteremporaries a murder committed in the beginning of the fourteenth? A writer who also sported with the public credulity, had already endeavoured, in 1794 or 1795, to diffuse the same opinion in a pamphlet entitled, *The Grave of James Molay*, in which the vengeance of the Templars is represented as the cause of the Revolution in France.

“ But the Duke of Orleans was Grand-Master of the French Lodges.”—Yes, for a very obvious reason:—the Free-Masons, notwithstanding their pretended zeal for equality, were fond of seeing at their head a man of illustrious rank.—He succeeded the Prince of Conti. Besides, all the Lodges of France did not acknowledge him as Chief; several were affiliated to the Grand Orient of London.

A German author, Gürtanner, believed that there existed at Paris a particular club, specially employed to diffuse revolutionary principles, and that it was denominated the *Club de la Propagande*. He traced its existence as far back as 1786. There was not, however, in effect any other *propagande*, but the zeal of all the par-

tizans of the Revolution, who, in all the circumstances of which they could take advantage, have exerted themselves in order to augment the number of their proselytes. The author of *Memoirs of Jacobinism* improves on Gürtanner. He establishes the Propagande in the Committee of the Grand Orient of Paris, from the year 1776. The proof which he gives of it is, that in 1776 an officer of artillery, named Sinetti, on visiting a lodge at Lisle, foretold a great Revolution which would deliver the world from superstition and the power of Kings. He adds, that he was treated as a madman. If all the emissaries have had the same success, it is difficult to explain the influence of the Grand Orient. He pretends that the same Committee has, during the Revolution, issued orders under pain of the *aqua tophana*. Never was this *aqua tophana* so much spoken of, and never was less use made of it: for amidst the numerous crimes which the factious have occasioned, we are not certain of a single instance of poisoning. But where is the evidence which confirms the existence of these pretended orders? He has seen, he says, a Free-Mason who said he had received such; and this Free-Mason had in his hands a manuscript, which contained the names of other persons who had received similar orders.

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There is, therefore, only a single witness of a fact so important, and this witness may have been the dupe of an impostor.

Dr. Robison speaks of a letter written by the Lodges of the Grand Orient, in 1789, in order to recommend to the brethren to maintain the Revolution. I am unacquainted with this circumstance; but supposing him not to have been deceived, I say there is not the slightest connexion between adopting a revolution and the causing it one's self. There is no proof that the other Lodges have thought as the Grand Orient; and there is no crime in having hoped, in 1789, that the Revolution would promote the happiness of France.

In the *Memoirs of Jacobinism*, the author exerts himself to demonstrate that the famous book of St. Martin, *Of Errors and of Truth*, has in view to overturn all governments:—"Be-
" cause," says he, "this work represents them as
" the result of the caprices of men, and not of
" a voluntary association; because it is there
" maintained that in the Golden Age there was
" no other authority but that of knowledge
" and of virtue, and that every man, by attain-
" ing to perfection, would be a real King."
But it is evident that those reflexions have a

mythic sense; that the author has had no other design but to point out the natural superiority of virtuous and enlightened men over those who are not so, and to cause it to be felt how much the empire which may be acquired over one's self, is more worthy of our ambition than the most absolute empire over others. Besides, what is said of the golden age can never be applied to our age of iron. The Abbé Barruel acknowledges that St. Martin commends submission to public authority, such as it is established, in order to avoid *private authorities*—and in fact this is the true motive of the obedience which is due to magistrates: it is in order to guarantee individuals from the abuse of their mutual force, that government is indispensable.

Dr. Robison thinks he has remarked in the same book the design of destroying all religions, the fear of future punishments, and the hope of future rewards; he acknowledges, nevertheless, that a Divine Providence is there proved, and that the love and respect which all men owe to this Providence is recommended. He complains that it contains declamations against superstitious opinions, injustice, and the vices of the great. If this were a crime, Massillon, Flechier, and Bossuet, would be guilty, and Dr. Robison would be so himself.

Besides,

Besides, in the enigmatic style of St. Martin, we cannot find a sense calculated to dissipate all obscurities—and for this very reason, it may be interpreted as every one pleases. Bode, who saw Jesuits every where, as the Abbé Barruel sees Jacobins every where, printed an explanation of the book *Of Errors and of Truth*:—according to him, all the allegories apply to the doctrine of the Romish Church; and he endeavours to prove that St. Martin wished to serve the interests of the Jesuits and of the Pope.

The sect of Martinist Free-Masons had its centre in the Lodge of Benevolence at Lyons. This Lodge merited the name it had chosen, by the abundant succours which it gave to the poor. Dr. Robison has said, “That its members and “their correspondents were impious and rebels.” I have known many Martinists, both of Lyons and of different towns of the southern provinces, who, very far from seeming attached to the opinions of modern philosophers, professed to despise their principles. Their imaginations, exalted by the obscurity of the work of their patriarch, disposed them to all kinds of credulity. Although several of them were distinguished for their talents and literary acquirements, they had their minds constantly occupied with spirits, ghosts, and

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miracles.

miracles. They did not confine themselves to the observance of the established religion, but they gave themselves up to those practical parts of devotion in use among the less-informed classes. In general, their morals were very regular. A great change was to be remarked in the conduct of those who, before adopting the opinions of the Martinists, had lived in dissipation and in the pursuit of pleasure. The Abbé Barruel maintains, that the Free-Masons of this sect are Idealists, that is, that they do not admit the existence of bodies. This absurd system was never approved but by some pious enthusiasts : but he attributes it to them, that he may have it in his power to accuse them of believing that they can never render themselves criminal by the senses, and of approving prostitution. I do not hesitate solemnly to declare that this assertion is a calumny, the falsity of which is demonstrated to me by the most certain proofs. He names among the revolutionary Martinists, Milanés of Lyons, member of the first Assembly, and Prunelle de Lierre, of Grenoble, member of the Convention. The former, whose intentions were pure, entertained in 1789 opinions perhaps in some respects extravagant, although very different from those of the madmen who wished to break all the bonds

bonds of civil order. He was neither a conspirator, nor ambitious, nor capable of injuring those who did not share his sentiments. He wished neither to attack property, nor public nor individual security; and the most evident proof of the benevolence of his heart, of his love of justice, the proof that Martinism did not teach the overthrow of States, is, that he perished with so many other victims in the noble and glorious resistance of the brave Lyonnese against the most dreadful tyranny.

Prunelle de Lierre was generally esteemed in his town before the Revolution: he was religious and of austere manners. He voted several times in the Convention against the principles of justice. God alone can know whether he was misled by false systems, or whether he voluntarily promoted crimes: but it is neither Free-Masonry, nor the doctrine of St. Martin, which occasioned his errors and his faults. The number of Martinist Free-Masons who have opposed the progress of anarchy, far surpasses those who have favoured it. In 1789, the Venerable of a Martinist Lodge in Dauphiny, learning that a banditti had joined some peasants, deceived by counterfeit orders of the King, in order to pillage and burn the country-houses of the Nobles, used every possible effort
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in the civil office which he enjoyed, in order to put an end to those ravages. He endeavoured to communicate to others his zeal for maintaining the right of property. He was not content merely with having caused the severe orders which were issued against the incendiaries and robbers: he himself conducted the armed force, fought with them, and always exhibited as much intrepidity in his actions as purity in his principles.

I was myself witness of the anxiety suffered by another Martinist, called by the general esteem to one of the offices of magistracy, established by the Constitution of 1791. He knew that that Constitution was defective, and would not employ all his efforts to maintain it; he knew, at the same time, that it was of the greatest importance, not to let the authority fall into the hands of avaricious and cruel men. Nevertheless, the religious respect he had for an oath, did not permit him to explain to his own satisfaction that which was demanded of him, and he refused it. I have known Martinists, friendly to rational liberty, who wished to see fixed laws substituted for arbitrary power; but who wished for successive ameliorations without disorder and without violence. I have known others who recommended passive obedience,

ence, prayed that the King might acquire an absolute authority, and exerted themselves in defending the privileges annexed to venal charges, or to the title of noble. I name neither these last nor the preceding, that I may not rekindle animosities not yet sufficiently abated.

What a triumph for the Abbé Barruel, if he could have divined that Amar, the member of the Public Committee of the Convention, to whom was committed the charge of pronouncing the death-harangues against his colleagues destined for execution, was a very zealous Free-Mason, and one of the most enthusiastic Martinists! I ought, however, to warn those who may be disposed to find in this circumstance an argument against Free-Masonry, that Amar remained a spectator of the events till the final triumph of anarchy; and that, down to that epoch, he had no other political system but that of the prerogatives of his office of Treasurer of France.* He observed with great exactness the forms of the Romish Church. If his devotion was only hypocrisy, it had at least an object very foreign to public affairs. He gloried

* An office of little importance, which conferred the title of nobility.

gloried in his piety, even before those who had themselves the least pretensions to it.

It is impossible for those who are capable of comparing two ideas, to hear without indignation the fanatic Swedenborg accused of materialism. Because he supposes spirits to have corporeal forms, in imitation of so many ancient philosophers and divines; because, in his figurative language, God is denominated the Spiritual Sun, whose love is heat, and whose light is wisdom—the author of *Memoirs of Jacobinism* thence concludes, that he believed the soul to be material, and knew no other principle but fire. By a singular contradiction he acknowledges, that this pretended atheist placed the souls of the just among the angels; that he had seen visions in London in 1745; that he invoked the dead; and that his chimerical ideas were the consequence of disease.

The Abbé Barruel asserts, that in the Congress of Free-Masons held at Wilhelmsbad, in 1782, to which there came Deputies from every part of Europe, a great conspiracy was formed to overturn all governments. I might oppose to this assertion, the testimony of all the persons present at that Congress; I might mention several of them whose zeal for the maintenance of the governments of their country has been
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ever acknowledged : but it would be conferring too great advantages on the accusers, to take the trouble of furnishing proofs against suppositions void of probability. The Abbé Barruel founds his conjectures only on some words repeated by M. de Gilliers after the unfortunate and respectable Virieu, member of the National Assembly. This honourable man, on returning from the Congress, is said to have asserted, that there existed a conspiracy which religion and authority would hardly be able to resist. It is asserted, that from this time he became the enemy of Masonic mysteries. I by no means call in question the confidence due to M. de Gilliers : but, with the purest intentions, we may easily be deceived as to the sense of a phrase heard in conversation. Virieu might have spoken of the opinions of some members of the Congress as dangerous, without believing that he had taken part in the deliberations of an assembly of conspirators. He never ceased to esteem the Martinists. If he had been acquainted with any project alarming to the safety of nations ; if he had been persuaded that the numerous Society of Free-Masons would take advantage of all circumstances in order to corrupt the multitude, and to disturb the public order—would he have seen without fear the first symptoms
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of a great change? Would he have consecrated his efforts to liberty, if he had known that, under that sacred name, the most dreadful licentiousness would be introduced?—No. That religious and enlightened man, whose thoughts were incessantly employed about the happiness of his country—that generous man, who could not endure the triumph of the wicked, and died at Lyons fighting for justice, whose loss M. de Gilliers deplures, as well as myself, and whose memory we both respect, would not one of the first have solicited the establishment of a free constitution—he would not have maintained that France had no real constitution, but only a versatile administration without any determined principle, if he had known that some factious or fanatical men were ready to take advantage of the successes obtained by the friends of the people, in order to cover France with blood and ruins.

The Congress of Wilhelmsbad had no other object but to compare the different systems respecting the origin of the Societies of Free-Masons, respecting the different doctrines professed in the Lodges, in order to find out, if it were possible, some useful object, in order to give them an uniform government, the same ceremonies, and the same opinions. This undertaking,

taking, which had been already attempted before, and which has been since renewed several times, did not answer the expectations of those who had proposed it. The majority of reasonable Free-Masons attaching little importance to the labours of their Order, the enthusiasts were those who appeared in the greatest number: the Swedenborgians, the Martinists, the Rosicrucians, had the chief influence. They disputed—disagreed—and separated, much discontented with one another.

The author of *Memoirs of Jacobinism* does not hesitate to multiply the suppositions necessary to his views. According to him, the principal Free-Masons of France kept secret the plan of the Revolution just till the favourable moment: afterwards they armed the brigands—transformed themselves into clubs, into municipalities—and commanded thefts, incendiaries, and murders. Nevertheless, if this writer and the other accusers of the Free-Masons had informed themselves more exactly with respect to those of France, they would have seen that the majority of the Lodges were composed of magistrates, military officers, and persons of some property; and that there are many more Free-Masons among the Emigrants than among the partizans of the Revolution.

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Among the revolutionary Free-Masons, Bailly has been mentioned, who wished for no changes in the form of government, and Barnave, who never was a member of any Lodge. Dr. Robison has been so far led into error, as to represent Despremenil as a martyr to equality; whereas this eloquent and courageous magistrate, whose intentions I by no means blame, always supported the interests of the Parliaments and of the Noblesse. He places in the number of Martinists, the Abbé Maury, now a Cardinal, although he constantly opposed the maxims of anarchy, as well as the establishment of a free Constitution; and although he defended with great firmness and talents a doctrine too favourable to superstition and arbitrary power.

In short, Dr. Robison names me also.—If what I have said on the Free-Masons should ever reach him, he will be surprised at the profane tone of my discourse, in which I should not have indulged myself, had I been of the number of the adepts. I declare solemnly that I have never been either Free-Mason or Martinist. It is enough for me to obey the laws, and to acknowledge the superiors which they give me. I have by no means any intention of increasing the number of those to whose will I should be bound to conform. I am fond of enjoying
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all the independence which the public order can guarantee to individuals, and I shall not expose it to the fancies of a Grand Master, of a *superintending brother*, or of a *terrible brother*. I detest oaths which are not indispensable, and every thing which restrains without necessity the liberty of speaking as I think.

I hope my readers will excuse this declaration. In three different editions, Dr. Robison has named me among the members of a Martinist Lodge:—one party may consider this quality as an honour, others as a subject of blame; but it does not belong to me, and it is my duty to say so.*

The Abbé Barruel accuses the Free-Masons of Paris, of having written to the Provincial Lodges, in order to engage them to maintain the Constitution and the authorities which it had
 N established.

Note of the Author.—Dr. Robison has been deceived with respect to many circumstances. He has very well distinguished the difference which exists between the Peers of the British Isles and the ancient French Noblesse. He has acknowledged the dreadful effects of the corruption of manners of which the first classes set the example to the people, the abuses introduced into the established religion, the prodigalities of the Court, the oppression of the poor, and the arbitrary power of different public officers. But he has made Mirabeau the chief of the democratic party—he
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established. It is thus that the spirit of party may convert into crimes the most honourable action. It is true, that the Constitution of 1791 had given to the Executive Power such feeble supports, and had created for the factiously-disposed so many means of exciting tumult, that it was very easy to overturn it: but they who saw with dread the torrent of anarchy rushing forward, and who united with one another in order to put a stop to its ravages—can they reasonably be accused of having wished to destroy the authority charged with causing the laws to be obeyed, when in fact they were exerting themselves to defend it?—of having wished to encourage the disorders which they were endeavouring to prevent?—of having wished for an equality of power and of fortunes, when they were protecting an hereditary royalty?

Nothing would be more absurd than to attribute the excesses of the Revolution to Free-Masonry,

has placed M. Necker in their party.—He believes that M. Lally Tollandal was an advocate, because he defended the memory of his father, with eloquence, before several tribunals. He says that the first proposition for uniting the Orders had been made by a Free-Mason; whereas the authors of this proposition were the States of Dauphiny, and afterwards, by their order, the Deputies of that Province.

Masonry, because some Free-Masons have been seen among the most ardent Revolutionists. Men of all professions have appeared on the scene in this bloody tragedy. The question is not whether there are mad or criminal Free-Masons, but whether a doctrine is taught in their Lodges calculated to mislead or corrupt them—whether it be true that they are assemblages of conspirators. How is it possible to suppose that principles of anarchy are there professed, when, among those who frequent them, we may find, even to this day, Kings, Princes, Priests, Magistrates, and religious men, devoted to the government of their country. The societies of Free-Masons are diffused throughout all Europe; and yet, except France and the countries into which her armies have penetrated, no State has suffered any political change. Even if there should not exist a single Free-Mason in the world—if those who govern ruin their finances, render their armies discontented, allow disorder to be introduced into every part of the administration, and then assemble a great number of deputies of the people in order to demand succours of them, revolutions will be inevitable.

OF THE

German Illuminati.

ALL the mystic quacks of the present century have been denominated Illuminati; and all those who employ themselves about alchemy, magic, cabalistic ceremonies, ghosts, and connexions with intermediate spirits; such as the St. Germain's, the Cagliostro's, the Swedenborg's, the Rosicrucians, and the Martinists. But there existed another species in Germany. An association was formed, the members of which themselves assumed this title. It was unknown to the rest of Europe, but it has been rendered famous since its dispersion by a pretended discovery of great importance. It has been said that its purpose was to destroy all the established governments—that the Jacobins were its agents and its disciples, and the Revolution of France its work; that it is only dissolved in appearance; that its emissaries are diffused in every country, and secretly destroy, in every quarter, the basis of social order.

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The Illuminati are denounced to all Sovereigns. They have engaged the general attention, and their name alone is an object of terror. It is adopting a curious mode, in order to render a man odious who believes in liberty and justice, to say, "*He is a Jacobin:*" but it is a resource of which the partizans of despotism and superstition know how to make frequent use. Now they have one still more efficacious: they say, "*He is an Illuminé.*" At this word, credulous persons are seized with dread: it recalls instantly to their imagination a secret power which strikes unseen, for which massacres, pillage, and desolation, are mere sports, and from which it is impossible to guard one's self. In fact, what a dreadful power is that of a society which, from the heart of Germany, has overturned a great Monarchy, and shaken all Europe? So active an influence is not in itself very probable; it has nevertheless been believed possible, and the dread of it has been successfully excited among many persons in England, whereas it has been no longer spoken of in Germany for the last thirteen years.

Let us examine impartially the origin and the *real* spirit of the association of the Illuminati. It is easy to know them, since the Government of Bavaria has caused all the papers to be pub-

lished which were found, belonging to the principal members of this Order; and since this publication has occasioned a great number of works, some in order to oppose, others in order to defend them. I hope that my readers, in disapproving of the institution of this secret society, will distinguish those of the Illuminati whose intentions were pure and opinions respectable, and those whose doctrine and projects ought to be condemned; and that they will acknowledge that even these last, whatever faults may be laid to their charge, have not taken any part directly or indirectly in the Revolution of France.

It was in 1767 that M. Weishaupt, Professor of Laws in the University of Ingolstadt, in Bavaria, in order to remedy the evils which superstition and ignorance bring upon mankind, took the resolution of contributing to the encouragement of talents and of virtue, and of surrounding the sovereign power with persons most capable of directing it by their councils, and of causing the exercise of authority to be placed in the purest hands. But, instead of following the execution of this noble plan as far as might be in his power, by a public and frank employment of his talents, fearing lest prejudices and private interests should present
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too many obstacles to him, he formed the plan of a secret society, whose efforts might escape the vigilance of the enemies of truth; which should have its laws, its chiefs, its rewards, its punishments, and whose members should be subject to a blind obedience.

M. Weishaupt imitated the discipline of the Jesuits, who having, by solemn engagements, united their power in the hands of one man, were the passive instruments of his will. He communicated his project to some confidants, whom he made his first Apostles under the name of *Areopagites*. He agreed with them that he should be the chief; known only to the first disciples, but invisible to the majority of the members of the Society. It was agreed also that, in order to excite curiosity and increase the candidates, the institution should be spoken of as so very ancient that the traces of its origin had been lost.

The Society was far from being numerous for several years, and the first *Areopagites* were only students of the university, or other persons who enjoyed little influence, when M. Weishaupt became acquainted with a Hanoverian, named the Baron de Knigge, a famous intriguer, and long practised in quackery in the Lodges of Free-Masons. This new missionary was in-

defatigable in zeal: by his advice new degrees were added to the old ones; and it was resolved to take advantage of Free-Masonry, although they heartily despised it. It was decided that they should add to the degrees of the *Illuminati*, those of apprentice, of journeyman, of master, and of Scotch knight; that they should boast of possessing, exclusively, the true secrets of Free-Masons; and that it should be affirmed, that the *illumination* was the true primitive Free-Masonry. The Baron de Knigge afterwards visited several towns in Germany, in order to seek for proselytes. He was provided with all kinds of powers. He distributed, as he pleased, the different degrees. He boasted of having, himself alone, illuminated above five hundred persons, in Franconia and Suabia, in Westphalia, in the Palatinate, and in the Circles of the Rhine. He went to the Congress of Free-Masons, at Wilhelmsbad, in 1782; he took advantage of the intervals of the sittings, in order to make enrolments. In the number of the initiated were soon to be found magistrates, ecclesiastics, men of learning, ministers of state, and even princes. As the missionaries were continually speaking of the great power of their Order, it is easy to conceive that many candidates would be attracted by

by the hope of obtaining employments, and of ensuring protectors; that some men of a covetous and ambitious character were eager to become members of this association; nevertheless, we should form a very false idea of it, if we were to believe that they formed the greatest number. Some very enlightened persons, and of the most respectable character, did not resist the offer which was made them, of entering into a Society which wished to correct slowly the abuses of administration, to re-establish good morals, and to place all the public employments in the hands of men most worthy of exercising them.

The Baron de Knigge having initiated into all the mysteries, some men of greater credit than the Areopagites, these last saw themselves deprived of their former influence in the direction of the affairs of the Order. They complained bitterly—their complaints were useless. The Areopagus was soon without any functions, and no new members were nominated.

When an Illuminé met with a man in the world, who appeared to him to have it in his power to be useful to the Order, he informed his superiors of the qualities which distinguished him; and when he was authorised to admit him to the noviciate, he endeavoured to gain his confidence;

confidence ; boasted to him of the happiness of belonging to a Society which procured for the human race, and might procure for him also, the greatest advantages. After having inspired him with the desire of becoming a member, he caused him to swear that he would never reveal any thing to the profane, and that he would obey all the commands which should be transmitted to him. The novices paid a small sum for their reception : they were not assembled together, and they remained under the inspection of the Illuminé who had received them, and who rendered an account of their opinions, and of their conduct.

M. Weishaupt recommended to the Illuminati who knew him, and caused it to be recommended to those to whom he remained unknown, to bring into the Order persons who had the greatest means of influence, on account either of their employments or of their riches ; taking care to leave them in the inferior degrees, should it be found that they did not possess the proper dispositions. Those who had experienced injustice were, in a particular manner, to be sought out. They were to employ different artifices in order to obtain candidates, and to excite in the mind of the Novices the desire of contributing to the general happiness, and of governing

governing those who govern. Those Illuminati who were employed to receive Novices, were denominated *Insinuators*. The reports of reception, found among the papers seized by order of the Duke of Bavaria, prove that some Insinuators had so far abused the weakness or the ambition of the candidates, as to make them acknowledge that the Order had the power of life and death, for the interest of the human race.

After a certain time of trial, a Novice came to the degree of Minerval. A certain number of Minervals were assembled together under the presidency of an Illuminé:—they were employed in literary exercises—they were made to treat of questions of morality and politics. If their opinions were not such as were wished, they did not attain to any higher degrees.

A Minerval became afterwards an Illuminatus Minor, and had then under his direction a Lodge of Minervals. He was bound to prefer those who appeared most sensible to the cries of distress, in whom were remarked perseverance and courage. He was bound to let them know the evils which afflict mankind; what men are, and what they might be; to inspire them with respect for the Superiors of the Order; to convince

vince them of the necessity of obedience, and to direct them by their ruling passions.

Those of the first class were chiefly employed in refuting the doctrine which makes happiness consist in sensual pleasure; and those of the second class, in refuting that which authorises us to make pleasure in general the object of our actions. The system of Epicurus was condemned; that of the Stoics was recommended.

In order to become Illuminatus Major, the minor was bound to give to his superiors a detailed account of his preceding conduct, a declaration of his qualities and of his defects; and he received, on their part, the judgment which they had themselves formed respecting them, according to the observations they had made, or had themselves obtained. The Illuminatus Major was bound to point out the employments which might be at his disposal, that for the advantage of the Order they might determine on those whom he should name, or by his influence cause to be named. The end proposed for the Illuminati Majores was, to disseminate truth, and cause virtue to triumph; to protect and to recompense talents; to direct the education of youth; to deprive vice of power, and to confer it on honest men; to bind insensibly the hands of the wicked; to govern without

without seeming to command them ; *to surround the powers of the earth with a legion of indefatigable persons, directing all their efforts, according to the plan of the Order, towards the happiness of the human race ; to establish an universal empire without destroying civil ties ; inasmuch that the different governments might exercise every other power but that of preventing the Order from rendering virtue triumphant.* They were taught, that they ought not to excite revolutions, to oppose force to force, and substitute one tyranny for another ; that a violent reform was dangerous, and that wisdom had no need of violence. So far the maxims are mostly estimable : we shall soon quote some that are not so.

It was recommended to the Illuminati who took the masonic degree of Scotch Knight, to contribute to the triumph of the ancient Masonry ; to resist superstition and despotism, and to fulfil all their civil and domestic duties ; to give themselves up to the research of the true religion, and of the true doctrine of the Free-Masons preserved by the sages, in the number of whom was placed Jesus Christ. Afterwards they might acquire the degree of *Epopt*. The Epopts were told what J. J. Rousseau has maintained, that the distinction of property has been

been the source of the greatest misfortunes; that it has multiplied the necessities of men, and rendered them feeble and dependent. It was said, that savages are the most enlightened, and the freest of human beings. Civil society, the authority of all governments, and attachment to one's country, were considered as a fatal result of our factitious wants, and of our love of riches. The life of the ancient Patriarchs was represented as worthy of being the object of all our regrets; and the future restoration of this sort of life, the end of all our exertions. With this extravagant doctrine they united a hope which was not less so: they flattered themselves that they should be able, without violence, to destroy all the barriers which divide mankind, and to cause princes and nations to disappear.

The means by which it was intended to restore the Golden Age were doubtless the best chosen, if the Golden Age were possible. They wished to teach men to conquer their passions; to render them benevolent, patient, indulgent; to free them from all wants which nature does not give; to instruct them, not in useless sciences, but in that of their duty. Instruction, and the general security, it was said, will render them capable of living *without princes and without*

without magistrates. The power of governments was compared with that of a father, which ends with the age of reason of his children. It was necessary to render themselves terrible to the wicked, as soon as they should be numerous; *but they ought to avoid all violent commotions, and precipitate nothing — perhaps thousands of years might be necessary in order to attain their object.* Enough, however, would have been done, were happiness prepared for posterity in rendering them more and more perfect by a pure morality, such as Christ had taught.

The founders of the Illuminati, in their degree of *Epopé*, made a sport of religious opinions; they imitated the sacerdotal ceremonies, and pretended to believe that their system was only Christianity purified.

It is said that there were still two superior degrees, those of the *Magi* and of *Men Kings*, whose systems it has been impossible to discover. The Abbé Barruel supposes that in those degrees atheism was taught; but such an accusation ought never to be brought forward without the most evident proofs. M. Weishaupt formed a particular plan of instruction on the means of directing such of the Illuminati as are inclined to *theosophical* reveries, which is only to be understood of the Rosicrucians, and the partisans
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of Swendenborg. The Abbé Barruel, in order to find in it some proofs of atheism, has translated *theosophische Schwärmereyen*, by the words *la fantaisie de croire en Dieu—the whim of believing in God*. Either the Abbé Barruel is unacquainted with the German language, or he has not translated faithfully.

The discipline of the Order was so regulated, that each Illuminé was subjected to the inspection of a spy, whom he did not know, and who gave an account of his actions and of his discourses to superiors equally unknown to the greatest number. There were Directing Illuminati, Provincial Illuminati, and Regent Illuminati. There were also chapters of Scotch Knights, provincial and national Synods. A Directing Illuminatus, at the moment of his reception, was to be told, that Free-Masonry had been corrupted by enthusiasts, inspired persons, and alchymists, although its primitive purpose was to re-establish sound morality; and that, but for some pure men, reason would have been banished from the earth, by the Administrators of States, the Priests, and the Free-Masons—that the Society of the Illuminati would restore the reign of reason and of virtue—that it would separate from the private interests of religion and of the State men of the greatest

greatest talents, in order to consecrate them to the service of humanity in general, and *thus undermine the basis of civil order*, although it made no efforts in order to destroy it; that it laid open the vices of the different constitutions, in labouring at the means of rendering them all useless, which one day must arrive, though perhaps not for several thousand years.

They who became regents, presented themselves as slaves who groaned under the bonds of political institutions and of superstition. They were declared free—they were invited to govern mankind, in order to render them virtuous; and the happy time was announced when every father of a family should be sovereign in his cottage.

The Illuminati of the superior classes were invited to cultivate all the sciences, to exercise themselves in the art of explaining cyphers, and in that of taking off the impressions of seals, in order to obtain, as much as possible, the knowledge of all secrets, that the Order might have more means of power.

All their correspondence was in a figurative style; every town where the society formed establishments, had a particular name; and every Illuminé also received one, on his being admitted to the degree of novice.



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The Illuminati had acquired great influence in Bavaria. They disposed as they pleased of most public employments; the credit which they enjoyed excited jealousy; exertions were made to discover the springs of a league, the existence of which was proved by incontestable facts. In 1784, the Elector, alarmed, suddenly prohibited all secret societies. Some time after, four of the Illuminati, discontented with their chiefs, and who had not been admitted to the higher degrees, made their declarations: according to them, "the members of the society hated Princes and Priests, and were the apologists of suicide. One of their superiors had said, that if they had six hundred proselytes in Bavaria, nothing could resist them. They had the intention of seizing on all public employments: they would have reduced the Princes to be merely their slaves. They rejected every religious idea, and threatened to take vengeance on those who should wish to betray them. A blind submission to the orders of the superiors was exacted. The Marquis de Constanza had said, that nothing more was necessary in Germany but two illuminated Princes, surrounded with Illuminati. The higher degrees were not given to those who did not approve of the plan of delivering the people from Princes, Priests and Nobles, of establishing an equality of conditions,

conditions, and of rendering men free and happy."

These testimonies had doubtless some foundation in truth; but the witnesses attributed too indiscriminately to the Order in general the reveries of the chiefs. All the Illuminati did not hate Princes, Priests and Nobles; for it cannot be supposed that the Princes, Priests, and Nobles, who were members of the association, hated themselves; and they who wished to govern the Princes did not seriously think of suppressing their authority. With respect to the chimera of the absolute equality of all men in rank and in fortune, without magistrates and without laws, the chiefs did not pretend to attain that object, but by the perfection of the human race, by the destruction of all vices, and did not expect till after some thousands of years the accomplishment of their absurd hope.

M. Weisshaupt was deprived of his place of professor of law. The papers of several Illuminati were seized, in which were found the doctrine of the different degrees, such as we have stated it. Proofs were found against some Illuminati, of intrigues, of frauds, of imposture, of actions and of opinions which gave the lie to their pretended zeal for virtue. * We cannot

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but

* *Note of the Author.*—In the house of one Massenhausen were found a receipt of *aqua tophana*, receipts for producing abortion, and for taking off the impressions of seals.

but approve of the efforts of the Duke of Bavaria to suppress this society. As legislator he was bound to forbid it for the future, under severe penalties : but we should forget all the principles of personal security, if we did not blame the persecutions which were permitted against several persons. There existed no right to punish the Illuminati on account of their opinions. It was easy to refute their false systems ; and the vexations to which they were subjected were by no means proper to make them sensible of their errors ; neither ought they to have been punished for having formed a secret association ; for in a well-regulated State, an action is never condemned as criminal without an antecedent law. If it were otherwise, no citizen would be secure. Indifferent actions, or actions of the inconveniences of which he might be ignorant, might subject him to the caprices of those who govern, and expose him to punishments which he had not the means of foreseeing.

In pursuance of arbitrary orders, the houses of several Illuminati were violated ; others were arrested, and long detained in prisons and monasteries. They ought to have confined themselves to the punishment of those who should have continued to assemble in defiance of the law, causing the Judges to declare the penalties which

which it should have prescribed. With respect to particular crimes of which several, it was said, had been guilty, they ought to have been examined according to the established forms, and by the ordinary tribunals.*

M. Weishaupt took to flight, and a reward was offered to whoever should deliver him up. The Lodges of the Illuminati were thus shut up through out all Bavaria in 1785 : some still subsisted in other parts of Germany, till the end of the year 1786 : but at that epoch the publication of the papers seized upon, the eagerness with which malignity exerted itself to render a whole society responsible for the crimes of several of its members, the calumnious reports which were added to real faults, determined all the Illuminati to dissolve their association entirely. Some then acknowledged its inconveniences, others saw no longer any means of attaining the end which they had proposed to themselves.

M. Weishaupt demanded publicly, but in vain, that a regular accusation might be formed

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against

* *Note of the Author.*—The persecution against the Illuminati was so very arbitrary, that a Bavarian, named Meggenhoffen, auditor of a regiment, after being interrogated for fifteen days, was confined by an order of the Cabinet in a convent of Franciscans at Munich, in order to be there instructed in the Catholic Religion.

against him as the founder of the Illuminati, and that it might be examined before the tribunals. He even caused this just remonstrance to be printed, which however remained unanswered.

The destruction of the Society did not calm the hatred and jealousy which the influence of several of its members had excited. Their private enemies took advantage of this favourable circumstance. Some persons, whose intentions were pure, having conceived the order of the Illuminati to be dangerous to religion and to the State, did not believe that they could exert themselves too much in order to prevent its re-establishment. Many called in question its destruction, and feared that it was only apparent. Several works accused the Illuminati of having prepared the ruin of all governments; and when the Revolution of France began, it was asserted that they were the authors of it.

It has been seen by the preceding detail, that I am very far from approving the projects of M. Weishaupt. He ought to have considered, that if governments have not the right to disturb the liberty of private opinions, they who form assemblies, and take upon them to teach any doctrine, have not the right to withdraw themselves from the inspection of the magistrates.

magistrates. Socrates did not act thus. He exacted no oath from his disciples; he did not make the permission of hearing him an exclusive privilege; he did not render the refutation of his systems impossible, by disseminating them in secret—by deceiving his auditors with lies—by seducing them with promises, which flattered their cupidity and ambition—by reserving his precepts for those who contracted the engagement to believe and obey him. He taught justice not only to his friends, but to all men who could enjoy his conversation; he taught it to the Senate, and in public places. He braved all perils in order to defend it, and died the victim of his zeal. It is true, that among the ancients there existed secret societies, and secret doctrines; but they were produced in the times of ignorance and barbarity; and, when civilization had made some progress, the mysteries were a political spring in the hands of the magistrates, who were the guardians and the protectors of them. They were concealed from the multitude, but never from the chiefs of the State. But when, without the express or tacit consent of those who govern, a society is formed, whose members are subjected to superiors, and are bound by oaths, by the hope of rewards, by the fear of private vengeance, it

is usurping the sovereign power. The maintenance of the established government, and the general security, require that there should not exist a single authority which is not acknowledged by the law, or which the law may not destroy the moment a dangerous use is made of it. Every secret association, especially when it has in view the public interest, or the acts of administration, is a State within a State, and may become very dangerous to good order.

It has been said, in order to justify the founders of the Illuminati, that the Jesuits had great credit with the Government of Bavaria, and that there was no liberty of publishing one's opinions: but was it re-establishing this liberty, to seize on all their employments, in order to exclude from them those who did not blindly adopt their systems?

When Government does not give itself up to the last excesses of tyranny, it is more easy than is generally believed to speak the truth. Honest and courageous men, who do not act for their own interest alone, have not the language of passion; they do not irritate by violent declarations; they unite prudence with firmness; they combat with discretion the errors of the multitude, or the false systems of administration: but they know how to brave the anger of
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the wicked. If the openness of their character makes them enemies, it gains them also protectors. They who dare not express themselves openly when justice commands, are not worthy of serving her. May not a secret association for her defence be ill-directed, and favour of false systems? Such an association ought to alarm the magistrates and all good citizens: in order that it might be free from danger, it should be composed of infallible men.

Again it is said, that the inhabitants of Bavaria were superstitious, and that the cries of an ignorant multitude would have stifled the truth: but a people have a right to be governed in a way consonant to their opinions. If they are hurtful to the prosperity of the State, the people ought to be enlightened by those means which prudence authorises, and not constrained or deceived by secret assemblies. When a man calls himself the enemy of tyrants, he ought not to adopt their measures. By what right did M. Weisshaupt and his confidants wish to force a people to follow blindly their decisions? By what right did they pretend to seize on all employments, to concentrate the power in the hands of a party whose existence even was unknown to the greatest part of their fellow-citizens, and thus to ravish from the public opinion

opinion its influence, and from the depositaries of the sovereign authority the liberty of their choice? If a people cannot be instructed but by such means, let them rather remain in ignorance, than be exposed to the ambition or to the caprices of intriguers. Exertions ought certainly to be made, in order to instruct the people in useful knowledge; but it is perhaps better that prejudices should retard the progress of knowledge, than that it should be in the power of the learned to make the people adopt, without restraint, all the reveries produced by the desire of acquiring a name.

The doctrine taught in the first degrees did not originate in the imagination of Weishaupt and his friends. It was known before them; and since they have preserved silence, it has been again brought forward by men with whom they had not the smallest connexion. How many philosophers have maintained that savages are happier than civilized nations!—How many others have gloried in having no other country but the Universe!—How many others have thought that, by perfecting ourselves, we should have no further need of civil authority?—Christian sects have adopted the same error. The *Quakers* obey the magistrates, as we yield to force, but with the conviction that the precepts
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of the Gospel ought to be the only guide of Christians.

In fact, our passions alone render governments necessary. If all men knew and fulfilled their duties, no power on earth would have the right to constrain them. That every individual is susceptible of perfecting himself, and of always doing his duty, from the consideration of his duty alone, is what we may be allowed to believe, provided we do not expect frequent examples of this sublime virtue : but how can it be supposed that all men, at the same time, in every part of the world, can know with exactness, and much less can constantly observe, all the rules of morality ?— If the greatest portion of a people were sufficiently virtuous to have no need of government, a few wicked persons would be sufficient to render it necessary ; for without public authority to repress them, the good would become their slaves. If even the majority of mankind had their reason cultivated to the same degree of superiority, and if their wisdom prevented all disorders, is it not evident that one small people less enlightened would render political institutions indispensable, in order to ensure protection against their violence ? It is impossible to deceive ourselves in a question of this nature, when

when we faithfully observe the struggle of our passions and of our conscience. Should it not be said, that in order to be virtuous, it suffices to be learned; and that they who speak most of the precepts of justice, are always those who are the most faithful to them? The philosophers themselves are eternally disputing respecting some precepts of morality, and many have set the example of crimes which they have condemned. Religion lays hold of man from the cradle, in order to form him to virtue, and yet she alone has not sufficient influence to guarantee the general security; and what is impossible for religion, in spite of the most dreadful threats against vice, and in spite of the rewards which are promised to virtue, a proud philosophy would presume to be able to accomplish? "Suppose it were an error," says Weisshaupt, "it was respectable—it was without inconvenience—it was even useful, because it encouraged the exertions of virtuous persons, in order to learn to triumph over their passions." I reply, that this error is very dangerous, and that that is a bad school of morality, wherein the contempt of many very important duties is inculcated. If it be impossible to meet with a people who have not some political institution more or less imperfect, even amongst those

those whom we call savages ; if men are thus destined by their nature to live under governments, they must be divided into nations, as they are into families. They must have a country ; and the bonds of our country are equally sacred as those of our family. That system, therefore, which could induce us to forget them, is as pernicious as that would be which would lead us to believe that our obligations towards the State destroys our obligations towards our fellow-creatures of every religion and of every country.

Thus, such of the Illuminati as had pure intentions, or were unacquainted with the true opinions of this Order, or were, like them, misled by a false doctrine, gave them credit for an austere morality ; and they must have believed so, since these last were constantly repeating that, in order to be worthy of contributing to the happiness of man, it was necessary to lead an irreproachable life : that this happiness could not exist without virtue, and that the best lesson which could be given was that of example. They were ignorant of what has since been known, that Weishaupt and his intimate friends recommended to act with dissimulation, in order the better to observe the actions of others ; to suppose in the Order a false antiquity,

quity, a credit and an influence which it did not enjoy; and to decry those learned men whom they could not draw into their party.* They did not know that several of their chiefs had adopted the grand principle, so fruitful in crimes of every kind, that it is allowable to do evil, in order to arrive at good. They did not know the motives and the conduct of several men of vile character, who entered the association merely with the hopes of indulging in vice with impunity. One of these was so indifferent to every principle of morality, that a plan, which had not been put in execution, was found among his papers, for forming societies of illuminated women, who might serve the interests of the Order: there were to have been two classes, one of virtuous women, the other of immodest women. M. Weishaupt complained, in one of his letters, of having been deceived by one named Massenhausen; in another, he accused several of his adepts with being libertines and drunkards. He had the intention of causing one named Merz to be expelled for having attempted to commit a rape:—"What would our Marcus Aurelius say," added he, (it

* *Note of the Author.*—Weishaupt, astonished at the ease with which some of the Illuminati were led to see the purity of Christianity, in the degree of *Epopt*, wrote to one of his friends—*Poor humanity! what could I not make you believe?*

(it is thus that a man most respectable for his virtues and learning, M. Feder, of Gottingen, was called) “ if he knew to what a race of
 “ debauchees and liars he is associated? Would
 “ he not be ashamed of belonging to a Society
 “ whose chiefs promise such great things, and who
 “ execute so miserably the most beautiful plan?”

M. Weishaupt himself, who was constantly exhorting his disciples to become perfect in virtue—to contribute, by their example, to the re-establishment of good morals, nevertheless encouraged one of them to steal, for the library of the Order, some books from a monastery; and it is not in this alone that he has swerved from the principles of morality. It belongs to magistrates to punish criminal actions—it belongs to men of honour to brand with ignominy triumphant vice; but he whom the laws have not affected, who repents of his faults, and who is fallen into misfortune, ought no longer to inspire any other sentiment but indulgence and pity. I should wish therefore, if it were in my power, to avoid bringing again into notice the accusations brought against M. Weishaupt; but they have been so often published by his enemies, that I cannot injure him; and it is my duty to be impartial, and my wish to show that I am so.

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How can we believe in the possibility of a general unlimited perfection of the whole human race, when they who make this possibility the basis of their doctrine, who conceive hopes that one day reason alone will govern mankind without laws, without magistrates, and without religious opinions, are themselves incapable of following its precepts? What deplorable weakness may be united with the greatest talents! J. J. Rousseau expresses, in the most affecting style, the obligations and the sentiments of a good father; yet he abandons his children, renounces the pleasure of seeing them again, and loses them for ever. Weishaupt wishes to reform the world, to destroy vice, and render virtue all powerful—yet he obeys his passions; and, in order to save his own honour and that of an unfortunate woman, he renders himself guilty of the crime of abortion.

The members of a society cannot be responsible for each other's conduct. It would be very unjust to condemn the Illuminati indiscriminately; to forget that amongst them we have seen a great number of respectable men, attracted by the noble hope of contributing to the general good. In the list of names of those who composed this Order, for one suspicious
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name there are a hundred which command esteem. It is not surprising that Princes who desired the happiness of their subjects, have wished to take advantage of the offers of an Association which took upon itself to present to them, for the public employments, persons worthy of their confidence ; that they have been led to believe that it might procure the means of ameliorating, without tumult, the fate of their subjects, without changing the constitution of the State. I do not believe that they partook of the hope of M. Weishaupt, of preparing for a distant futurity the re establishment of the patriarchal life. Besides, such an illusion, which in a private person might have be founded in pride and the love of independance, would be, in a powerful man, the proof of the generosity of his sentiments. If ever you meet with Princes who can believe that men will one day be so perfect as to stand in need of no public authority, prove to them that such an opinion, if it were widely diffused, would weaken the power of the laws, and destroy the love of one's country :—but do homage to the benevolence of their hearts ; reserve your hatred for an opposite error, much more general, and much more hurtful—that which persuades them that the Divine Will has created mankind in order to pay them a blind obe-

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dience,

dience, which leads them to consider a people as an inheritance, which they may dispose of as they please.

In the works published against the Illuminati it has been impossible to throw the slightest suspicion on the true principles of the reigning Princes, members of this Order ; and I have no occasion to justify those whom nobody has attempted to accuse, and whose names alone ought to be their protection. Calumny, however, has not respected an Ecclesiastical Prince, not less distinguished for his knowledge than for his zeal for the interests of humanity. This will not excite astonishment when it is known that, in a literary society, he maintained that the philosophers of the age were not the authors of the Revolution of France. He could not render himself more guilty in the eyes of certain fanatics. It is pretended, that in the Society of the Illuminati he bore the name of *Crescens*, one of the most ardent enemies of the Christian religion ; and it has been supposed that, because he had taken that Philosopher for his patron, he partook of his doctrine. But it is false : he was not called *Crescens* ; he had a much more honourable name—that of *Bacon of Verulam*. They have represented as a partizan of anarchy, an enlightened Administrator, who in one work
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has proved the agreement between sound policy and morality, and demonstrated in another how dangerous it is to change the forms of government without the most imperious necessity, and that the duty of the chiefs of nations is to do all the good in their power by the established constitutions.

The works dispersed in England against the Illuminati, are so full of false assertions, that the celebrated Wieland has been marked out as a member of this Order, though in fact he never was. We have had it in our power to observe, with respect to him, with what ridiculous eagerness the spirit of party can exert itself in adopting a lie, and in drawing from it important consequences. M. Wieland published, in the time of the five Directors of France, Dialogues, in which the systems of the Jacobins were treated with the most thorough contempt, and the crimes they had occasioned animadverted on with an indignation which cannot surprise those who know the benevolence of his heart. He there maintained that, in order to put a stop to the evils of France, it was necessary to concentrate the power in the hands of one man, who should unite great talents with great courage; and he advised to choose Bonaparte. This idea had certainly nothing extraordinary in it. When,

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however, Bonaparte was seen in possession of the chief authority in the government of France, there were found in England persons so credulous as to say, that Wieland, in his pretended quality of Illuminé, had been in the secret of the late changes. They imagined then that the Illuminati still directed the events at Paris, and that Bonaparte was their agent or their disciple. The inventors of this absurd story have been deceived in the means of rendering the Illuminati odious; for what friend of humanity would not bless them for having put an end to the course of disorders and injustice under which France had so long groaned?

In admiring the genius of M. Wieland, we are not bound to approve the subject or the principles of several of his works; but there never was a man farther removed by character from the spirit of faction. There is no one who can be more unjustly accused of loving a turbulent democracy, or of wishing to disturb the tranquillity of States.

In like manner, M. Boettiger has been held up in England as one of the chiefs of Illuminism, although he never was a member of that society. The Abbé Barruel has even thought proper to affect towards him the tone of contempt and of insult. The humble French Ecclesiastic,

clerical, counterfeiting the man of quality, mentions him under the name of the *Sieur* Boettiger, an expression of superiority in use under the ancient Government. But what matters to this distinguished scholar the injurious language of a writer who has taken the liberty of insulting so many estimable persons? He will not succeed in depriving him of the respect merited by his knowledge, his zeal for the sciences, and his eagerness to render service to all whom it is in his power to oblige. He no more believes the doctrine of the indefinite perfection of the human race, without laws and without magistrates, than that of the partizans of slavery.

It is not difficult to point out the motives of the hatred of the Abbé Barruel against M. Boettiger. A wretch, named Dr. Bahrdt, who on account of some literary knowledge had been admitted amongst the Illuminati, but who, by his debauched morals and his fanaticism, alternately superstitious and impious, soon became an object of contempt in Germany, wished in 1787 to escape, by means of an imposture, from the indigence into which his debauchery had plunged him. He conceived the idea of publishing a *Prospectus*, under the title of *Project of Union*. According to this project, in order to

enlighten the people, there were to be established in every town societies of correspondence, and cabinets for reading; that the most proper works for destroying what he called prejudices, were to be printed and diffused; the authors who endeavoured to oppose them were to be rewarded; the writings which might favour them were to be dishonoured, and the booksellers payed in order to prevent their sale. He supposed himself charged with the general correspondence, and the direction of the establishment, by a committee of twenty persons of respectable character, and enjoying great influence.—It was only necessary to pay a rix-dollar to be a member of this pretended Philosophical Confederation. In order to forward the success of his plan, he addressed himself to those persons most capable of bringing it to bear. He sent false lists of subscribers; but it was not long before his lies were discovered. The persons whom he had named, being informed of the abuse made of their names, disavowed him. M. Bertouch, of Weimar, to whom Bahrde transmitted the papers relative to his plan, committed the care of examining them to Bode, the same Free-Mason of whom I have already spoken several times, who had been one of the principal members of the Society of the Illuminati;

Illuminati; and whom Dr. Robison, and the Abbé Barruel, represent in their works as the most violent of the factious, and the most rash of the innovators. Bode, however, incapable of seconding the criminal views of Dr. Bahrdt, prepared, in the space of three days, a small commentary on the plan of the Union, which he entitled, *Mebr Noten als Text*—"More Notes than Text." This was the work which contributed most to disgrace the plan of the Union; to make it known for what it really was—a speculation of avidity, the trick of a quack who wished to deceive the public. The work of Bode was anonymous; and as it was not suspected that the ancient Illuminati could thus place obstacles in the way of their respective designs, it was generally believed that the plan of Union had their general approbation, and that its real object was to revive that dangerous Society under a new disguise. Dr. Robison, and M. Barruel, deceived by the same conjectures, have represented the project of Bahrdt as a great conspiracy of the Illuminati against all governments and all religions. M. Barruel had affirmed, that the work *Mebr Noten als Text* was the work of a bookseller of Leipzig. Judge then of his indignation and surprise, when M. Boettiger, the friend of Bode, and depositary of a part of his manuscripts, an-

nounced in a journal, that the great conspiracy had been unveiled by one of the pretended conspirators. M. Barruel replies with injurious language, and persists in his assertion. He was answered by the Leipzig Bookseller himself, to whom he had attributed the work of Bode.

Dr. Robison and M. Barruel have pointed out as Illuminati some learned men who never were members of that Association; and they have not known several of those who were really so, and whom I shall not name, not wishing to expose them to calumnies.

Whatever accusations may have been brought against the Illuminati, how can it have been possible to confound their doctrine with that of the Jacobins of France? In the inferior degrees their only object was to favour the progress of reason, and to cause the public employments to be entrusted to the most enlightened persons. It was in the higher degrees that the dangerous principles were taught; but those principles were directly opposite to the opinions which were diffused in France. They who were called Jacobins, wished to overturn all governments, in order to establish an unlimited democracy—the Illuminati wished to direct the governments, but not to overthrow them; they wished to render them serviceable to virtue, and to render this virtue so general, that the governments might one day

day become useless. The Jacobins proscribed Princes, Priests, and Nobles;—and the Illuminati received them with predilection. The Jacobins excited the people to revolt; they would have wished to have had it in their power to arm the multitude with fire-brands and poniards in every part of the world, and to destroy in a few hours all social institutions, in order to re-compose them as they pleased:—the Illuminati professed to detest tumults and acts of violence. The Jacobins placed all their means of rendering the human race perfect, in the very perfection of political constitutions:—the Illuminati believed that it sufficed to instruct men, in order to render them better; and they expected, as the effect of science, not the establishment of a Democracy, but a return to the independence of savages in thousands of years. With the first, the idea of liberty was, the submission of each citizen to all the wills, just and unjust, of the majority of the people, which alone should regulate the State:—with the latter, the idea of liberty was, that each father of a family might one day be priest and king, and that mankind should be no longer divided into different nations.

A letter written by Knigge, in 1783, when he had quarrelled with Weisshaupt, has been
quoted,

quoted, in which he said to one of his correspondents, that they had reason to dread irritating him; that it would be easy for him to alarm the Princes and religious men, and to discover the novelty of the Order. It is not, indeed, to be doubted but that there were motives to dread for posterity the influence of a Society which seized on all employments. It must, above all, appear dangerous to such of the administrators who, not being members of the Order, were ignorant of its projects and intentions, and might believe its principles to be more injurious than they were in reality; but the letter of Knigge is no proof that they sought for means of disturbing the public tranquillity. The expressions of some letters are also quoted which would seem to shew that two or three Illuminati approved of revolts. But it is not by a few detached phrases, by the declamations, by the hasty opinions of some members, that we are to judge of the spirit of the Order—it is by the principles generally taught in the different degrees. Now the resolution never to excite tumults is repeated a thousand times in all the writings of the Illuminati which have been published by order of the Duke of Bavaria.

If it were true that the Illuminati had had the
same

same projects as the Jacobins, should we not have found the traces of some efforts in order to attain this end? They had acquired influence throughout the German Empire; and when they had the best means of executing their projects, when they had drawn into their party the Princes and Magistrates, or had surrounded them with their followers, there has not been in the two or three hundred Duchies, Principalities, and Republics which acknowledge the Emperor as their chief, the slightest mark of conspiracy. The most suspicious Illuminati have been imprisoned, interrogated, threatened—their most secret papers have been laid before inquisitors eager to find them guilty; and yet it has been impossible to quote a single enterprise formed under their direction, in order to overturn a Government. If they had entertained the doctrine of which they have been suspected, how would Princes ever have entered into their Association? * Certainly there does not exist in Europe a man mad enough to believe that the Princes who have been

* *Note of the Author.*—According to those who accuse them of having been conspirators, the most criminal were the members of the first class; but the greatest number of those members were persons enjoying important dignities, or the first offices of administration of several States of Germany, and even Ministers of the Emperor,

been named among the members of this Order, had any intention of encouraging plans against the public tranquillity. They were ignorant, says M. Barruel, of the resolutions taken by the Illuminati of the higher degrees. In principle, it is true, there was a design of not admitting them into the first class; but they quickly changed their opinion, and Knigge had given the higher degrees to persons of all ranks. How was it possible that they could have seduced so great a number of men distinguished by their employments, by their fortune, and several by their learning and their virtues? How could it possibly happen, that some Illuminati of the first degrees have shewn the greatest zeal in order to protect Germany against the ravages of anarchy, and that there are some of them even at present in the party of those whom the fanaticism of the Jacobins has thrown into a contrary fanaticism; and who at present know no other legitimate government, but that of an absolute monarchy, or an absolute aristocracy? If M. Weisshaupt himself had any intention of overturning, by violence, the established authorities, he would not have solicited so strongly the judicial examination of the accusation against him—his enemies would have been eager to prosecute him, and to prove that he was a conspirator.

siprator—he would not have received an asylum and succour from a Prince who is too well acquainted with the principles of a wise administration not to detest anarchy. He has only seen in the systems of the first degrees of the *Illuminism* some chimeras, produced by a warm imagination. He has not refused to a philosopher, in whose errors he has no share—to an unfortunate man whose repentance expiated his faults—his protection, which would certainly not have been granted to a declared enemy of all government.

The Illuminati, those pretended factions, those great conspirators, continually occupied with the plan of overturning States, but who have not disturbed the tranquillity of a single village, are, according to Dr. Robison and M. Barruel, the destroyers of the old Government of France—the predecessors, the masters of the Jacobins—the true authors of all their crimes. Nevertheless, we find no mention of France in that heap of letters, or of memorials, which have been seized in Bavaria. The list of the members of the society has been found, and that of the towns wherein its lodges and agents existed. We did not find in them the name of a single French town, nor of a single person of that nation. It is proved by the correspondence

ence of the Illuminati, that they had entertained the hope of extending their influence beyond the limits of the German Empire, but that they had neither the means nor the time to succeed. All the attempts made in Switzerland had been unsuccessful; with the exception of two or three Italians established in Bavaria, there was not a single member who was not German. M. Weisshaupt, it is true, said in his instructions to the regents, that *the sacred legion was diffused through the whole universe*; but it was because he would adhere to his maxim, that in order to obtain credit, it is necessary to appear to have it. He supposed his Order very numerous, from the same motives which led him to suppose it very ancient. A German, who had been an Officer in the service of France, having imagined that by the influence of the Illuminati it would be easy for him to obtain protectors with the French Government, presented a memorial to one of them, in order to procure for him the Order of Merit and a brevet of major. Knigge wrote with his own hand on the margin of this memorial—*What devil bath put in their head this fable of our all-powerfulness?*

If the Illuminati had brought about the Revolution of France, several of them would have wished to enjoy their triumph; they would have crowded
to

to Paris, in order to take advantage of the success of their pupils, and to receive their homage. It is well known that foreigners went in crowds from all parts of Europe to take a share in the revolution; but those foreigners were the dregs of the nations, and it is impossible to name a single one who was of the *Illuminati*. It has been said, without any kind of proof, that the Prussian Anarchist Clootes, the orator of the human race, was the agent of the German Lodges. They could not have chosen one more incapable and more ridiculous.

The Society of the *Illuminati* was dissolved in 1787 : how, therefore, could it have produced the Revolution of France, which began in 1789 ? It is true, we have been assured that it was continued under more secret forms, but this assertion is void of all probability ; for the attempts which it is pretended have been made to renew the Order in the succeeding years, would be, on the contrary, the most certain proof of its destruction. They who say that the Order still subsists, ought to give up the attempt to persuade the Germans of it, who are witnesses of the conduct of those who established it.

M. Barruel having begun by accusing the Free-Masons, and especially the Rosicrucians, of being the authors of the Revolution of France,
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and afterwards wishing to bring the same accusation against the Illuminati, has found himself under the necessity of supposing them to possess the same principles, and of representing them as acting in concert. Nevertheless, he ought to have seen in the papers of the Order seized in Bavaria, and which have been published, that the Illuminati used the forms of Free-Masonry; but that they considered it in itself, separated from their degrees, as a puerile absurdity, and that they detested the Rosicrucians. Knigge, in upbraiding M. Weishaupt with the services he had rendered him, boasted of having written, in order to please him, against the Rosicrucians and the Jesuits, who had never done him any injury.

The following seems to be the motive for maintaining that the Illuminati of Germany have directed the Revolution of France.—The Lodge of the *Philaletes* of Paris had resolved, like the Free-Masons of Germany, to discover the origin and the purpose of their Society. They invited the brethren of all the countries of Europe to communicate to them the result of their researches. There was a Congress in 1784: its inutility did not prevent the calling of another in the year 1787. Bode went thither with a Major De Busche, in the service of the Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt, and presented

ſented a memorial, the ſame which I have already quoted*. He therein maintained that Free-Maſonry was the work of the Jeſuits: he brought together all the different kinds of quackery of which the Lodges had been the theatre—he exhorted the Free-Maſons to purſue an honourable plan. “ Endeavour,” ſaid he, “ to enlighten the world by ſcience and uſeful arts, and to remove peaceably hurtful prejudices—tolerate thoſe which it might be dangerous to deſtroy; but above all, let us take care not to infringe the ancient law which prohibits us from treating in our Lodges of ſubjects relating to religion or to the State.” Such are the expreſſions which I read at this moment in the memorial which Bode preſented to the *Philaletes*.

At the concluſion of his memorial, Bode ſays a few words reſpecting the Illuminati of Germany. He refers to the perſecutions they had experienced; he denies that their doctrine was criminal, and that they recommended ſuicide. He declares that they admitted the three blue degrees—

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* *Note of the Author.*—Bode died in 1793. He left many other manuſcripts on the origin and opinions of the Free-Maſons. Theſe have intereſted the curioſity of a Prince, to whom his heirs have ſold them. This acquiſition, of which the motive is ſo ſimple, has appeared to M. Barruel of great importance.

grees—neglected the higher degrees—endeavoured to form the hearts of young people, and cultivated all the sciences, except jurisprudence and theology.

It has been eagerly maintained that Bode and Major Busche went expressly to Paris in order to make proselytes, and that they had caused the system of Weishaupt to be adopted by all the Lodges of that capital. It is not impossible but that the former might have spoken of the Illuminati with an intention of founding the disposition of the *Philalethes*. In this case he was quickly obliged to give up all hopes. His friends attest that he was very much dissatisfied with his connexion with the Free-Masons of Paris. If the Society of the Illuminati had still been flourishing in Germany, it would have been easy for him to procure in France some correspondents: but it was dispersed, and its persecuted members thought only of the means of living in tranquillity. It would have been necessary then to create this Order a second time; and this it would never have been possible to accomplish, especially among the Parisian Free-Masons. The attraction of novelty was wanting to the system of M. Weishaupt. Cagliostro and Mesmer had found the art of surrounding themselves suddenly with a crowd of admirers

admirers, because they both announced great discoveries. It was not their doctrine which seduced, but their impostures and their surprising tricks. But what would Bode have been able to do in order to gain the confidence of the Free-Masons of Paris? If he had wished to exercise them, like the novices of Weisshaupt, in treating questions of morality and politics, their self-love would have revolted at seeing a stranger (a man of genius, it is true, but without any other literary title but some translations, and some insignificant pamphlets) institute a school for a society in which were to be found many celebrated scholars. If he had wished to speak to them of the advantages of uniting their means of credit in order to obtain employments, he could have taught them nothing in that sort of intrigues. The employments were long before-hand seized upon by different *coteries*. If he had made this proposition to the persons in favour at Court, they would have refused to give up their advantages: if he had made it to persons without influence, how could they have believed that it was in the power of Bode to protect them with respect to their own government? Such a plan was better adapted for Germany, where the inhabitants have a general country subdivided

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into

into three hundred particular countries. It was an excellent means of advancement, to have in all the States of the Empire friends and correspondents, to know all the vacant places, and to cause them to be speedily applied for. He who enjoyed some credit in Bavaria, was eager to offer his assistance in order to obtain some in Austria. When the Saxon granted his protection to the Suabian, it was just that the Suabian should grant him his; but in France there existed only one centre of distribution for employments. What could have been promised to the families in possession of the first dignities, and who disposed of all favours, to engage them to divide with the new associates the nominations which were exclusively reserved for them? In short, would Bode have been able to seduce the Parisians, by teaching them that it was necessary to render mankind perfect, and to prepare the return of primitive independence? The declamations on the happiness of savages, on the evils produced by social order, on the inconveniences of the division of property, had not been fashionable for a long time. The eloquence of J. J. Rousseau had surrounded his sophisms with all the *éclat* which could render them seducing: but with equal eloquence he had celebrated the civic virtues and the love of one's country; and his

his writings had in this last respect made a much more lively impression. Bode could not have chosen a place less adapted than the city of Paris to furnish him with lovers of the patriarchal life.

What men must Bode and Busche have been, if, in order to produce all the storms of the Revolution, it was only necessary to remain some weeks at Paris? What the fable says of the labours of Hercules is not more astonishing. If we are to believe the writings of Dr. Robison and M. Barruel, the systems of M. Wieshaupt were diffused with the rapidity of the electric fluid: the whole of France was illuminated, because all the Orders of the State wished to limit the power of the Monarch by a constitutional charter. I lived in the first period of the Revolution among the friends of true liberty; and I hope that I shall have the honour of being reckoned in this number. I am ready to declare on oath, that I never had the slightest reason to suspect any influence of the Societies of Illuminati, or of Free-Masons, or their principles. I was acquainted in the first Assembly with those who, having seized upon the helm, left the strait road, and conducted the vessel of the State into the midst of rocks; and I make the same declaration with respect to them.

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But who then are the illuminated French, who, in the Revolution of France, have executed the orders of the German Illuminati? Dr. Robison does not name them. M. Barruel takes a very simple method of accusing as Illuminati those whom he had accused as Free-Masons, or as Philosophers. He has quoted no precise fact, but with respect to two persons. He has said, that M. Mirabeau had been initiated, during his stay in Germany, by a French refugee named Mauvillon; and to prove it, he calls in the testimony of a German who had said so before him. They who have known Mirabeau will never believe it. His principles were directly contrary to those of the Illuminati. He was not a man to place his hopes at the distance of a thousand years. He never imagined that a people could become so virtuous, as to need neither laws nor magistrates. He has maintained the true theory of the balance of powers, and combated popular despotism on every occasion where the love of celebrity, and the interest of his ambition, did not lead him to act contrary to his own doctrine; and the Illuminati would never have been able either to add to his knowledge, to change his theory, or to correct his vices.

M. Barruel names another Frenchman who
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he pretends was illuminated: it is Prunello de Lierre, the zealous Martinist of whom I have before spoken, who had not the smallest influence on the Revolution of France, and who only appeared in the third Assembly. "He performed," says M. Barruel, "the office of *Insinuator*. He had wished to corrupt Camille Jordan; and not having been able to succeed in making him enter into the conspiracy, he had determined to ruin him by calumnies." If these facts were really attested by Camille Jordan, it would be no longer possible for me to deny that the Society of Weisshaupt had had correspondents in France: for whatever Camille Jordan should affirm, I would believe as if I had myself experienced it: but his testimony has been ill understood, or ill interpreted. I know from himself, that Prunello de Lierre, whose opinions were too favourable to anarchy, wished to make him adopt his principles; that not having been able to persuade him, he had not disguised his dissatisfaction; and that, in order to revenge himself, he told his friends that he believed him a dangerous man. But Prunello de Lierre never spoke to him of the Society of the Illuminati—he never even mentioned the name; and he

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made

made no demands in writing, as M. Barruel pretends.

What! they would have had the modesty and the docility to allow themselves to be led by two German Illuminati—they who, in hopes of rendering themselves illustrious by new combinations, had treated with the most profound contempt the doctrine of Montesquieu, of Blackstone, of all the publicists, and most celebrated legislators—they who pretended to be more skilful in liberty, than all the free people either of ancient or modern times—they whose extravagant systems have for so long a time delivered France over to the despotism of some madmen, the favourites of an ignorant and unruly multitude! It would doubtless have been less unfortunate, if they had allowed themselves to be seduced by the chimeras of illumination, and if they had employed themselves peaceably, like the Society of Weishaupt, about the means of seizing on all the public employments, and of rendering all governments useless, in the course of some ages, by the reign of virtue. What difference, in fact, between the evils which the Illuminati could produce, and those which FRANCE has suffered?

Now that I have said all that I conceived
might

might be useful, on the accusations published against the Illuminati, Free-Masons, and Philosophers, I ask, what can be the meaning of those writers who obstinately wish to multiply the number of the guilty in the Revolution of France? When all the motives which can influence sensible men command indulgence, even towards those who have committed real crimes, ought we still to imagine other crimes from mere conjecture?—Are there not sufficient subjects of hatred—must we increase their number?—Is it not easy to see that we cannot judge of probity in times of revolution, as we judge of it in times of tranquillity?—Under the dominion of the legal authorities we cannot be deceived with respect to our duty, and we are at least always liable to blame for having violated the established laws: but at the fatal epoch of the fall of governments, the public interest is abandoned to the shock of private opinions. Every one believes he sees, in the system he adopts, the safety of the nation; and, in those who oppose it, the enemies of general happiness. Conscience has no longer any certain guide—fanaticism weakens the moral sentiment: it accumulates crimes, even when the agents are free from criminal intentions—villains mix with the fanatics, in order

order to make them the instruments of their ambition. But when the fury of factions begins to subside, how are we to know the real state of consciences? how distinguish the wicked from the mad or the enthusiastic? There remains for those who wish to repair the evils occasioned by discord no other resource but to follow the example of Thrasylbulus, who, after having driven the thirty tyrants from Athens, caused the pardon of all outrages to be proclaimed, the sacrifice of all resentments; and in the countries which have not yet been ravaged by political dissensions, but where false doctrines threaten the tranquillity, the best means of guarding against them is by enlightening those who are deceived, and not by irritating them by unjust persecutions: it is by being tolerant as to opinions, inexorable with respect to actions which the laws condemn—it is by procuring to authority the support of those who can by their talents direct the judgments of the people.

They are deceived who think they serve governments by rendering odious to them all those who are not servilely attached to the prejudices of the multitude, and who wish to obtain, by the influence of reason alone, the reform of abuses. These imprudent friends of the depositaries of authority, are as dangerous
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to them as their enemies: they may lead them into dangerous measures, and engage them to protect abuses instead of reforming them. Mr. Burke said, in the British House of Commons, many years before the Revolution of France: " There is a time when men no longer
 " consent to support vicious institutions or usages,
 " because their ancestors have supported still
 " more vicious; there is a time when the
 " grey head of abuse inspires no further respect
 " by reason of its great age."

Knowledge is at present too much diffused in the greater part of Europe, to admit the possibility of destroying it. Opinions change with the age: those which are supported by truth and justice, alone triumph over time and the passions of men; as for the others, when the moment of their destruction is arrived, no power can possibly maintain them.

Some administrators in many States are but too much disposed at present to precipitate themselves into a wrong road. Instead of having learned by the Revolution of France, that in order to maintain a government, economy, order, and firmness, ought to be united with justice—but above all that they ought to be just, that every thing which gives dissatisfaction to the majority of the citizens ought to be carefully avoided—

avoided—they seem to believe that they ought to add to the yoke, in order to render it bearable; that the thoughts of men ought to be controuled, and humiliating forms multiplied, in order that the sentiment of their baseness may become the security of their chiefs, and of those who partake of their favour. I do not reproach them on account of these cruel opinions—it is to the madmen, known under the name of *Jacobins*, that the disgrace of them belongs. By degrading the philosophy of which they borrowed and polluted the language, they have brought into repute all that it had condemned. It is the indignation which they have merited, which leads to reject with contempt all the maxims they have made use of, without distinguishing the important truths which have served them as pretexts for their false principles. It is to their dreadful example that we are to attribute so many arbitrary orders—so many violations of the law of nations, either commanded or left unpunished. But unfortunate are they who shall believe that Robespierre has revealed to them the secret of power. The means of terror are useful only to the momentary domination of tyrants. Legitimate authority can only be maintained by justice. No doctrine can be more hurtful to governments,

ments, than that which acknowledges no other right but force—for they are not strong of themselves; they are so only by the concurrence of the wills of those who make it a duty to obey them; and the sentiment of this duty arises from the need of security and of justice, of which they are believed to be the defenders. This doctrine of force, were it generally diffused, would utterly destroy all the barriers which are opposed to the passions of men, and the governments would be overturned.

Ye who sincerely desire the tranquillity of States, offer therefore to the chiefs of nations more salutary counsels. Tell them that all governments have the same obligations; that their subjects have the same rights to personal liberty—that there are countries in which this liberty is happily guaranteed by political liberty, but that this advantage is not to be acquired at will—that the efforts in order to attain it cause great misfortunes, and often produce tyranny—that it is in the power of those who govern, even in the least limited monarchies, to render this guarantee unnecessary, and to procure for their subjects all the happiness which they could enjoy in the best regulated Republic: by never permitting any act of authority which is not directed by anterior laws—
by

by gradually destroying all privileges which are not attached to public functions—by removing the distinctions which divide men into inimical classes—by opening to merit a free access to all employments, to all honours—by protecting talents when directed by virtue—by respecting public opinion—by reconciling the liberty of the press with decency, the general tranquillity, and the honour of private persons—by causing the people to be instructed in their duty—by the principles of an enlightened religion—by those of a pure morality (for if the people are kept in ignorance and superstition, they are given up without defence to the sophisms of those who wish to corrupt them). —It is on these conditions that the magistrates are at liberty, or rather that they are bound by justice, to be inflexibly severe in the execution of the laws which punish conspirators.

Tell the people that every established government is legitimate, even that which owes its origin to conquest, when it has become necessary for the public tranquillity and order—when it is the protector of property, the defender of personal liberty. Tell them that one of the most essential rights of citizens, is that of denouncing the abuses of administration, and the vices of the laws, without ceasing to obey them,

them, without deviating from the respect which is due to the magistrates; that it is even a duty to tell the truth, at the risk of exposing one's self to unjust resentments; that sooner or later this truth will become useful, but that it would be criminal to wish to hasten its triumph by violence; that the excess of tyranny alone can justify an insurrection; and that the oppression must be very cruel indeed, where the evils it may produce can be equal to those which are the inevitable consequences of a tumultuous revolution in political institutions.

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